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A COMMENTARY  
ON THE TEXT OF

THE BHAGAVAD-GÍTÁ.

BY

HURRYCHUND CHINTAMON.

LONDON :

TRÜBNER & CO.

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Bhagavad-Gitā



A COMMENTARY  
ON THE TEXT OF  
THE BHAGAVAD-GÍTĀ;

OR,

THE DISCOURSE BETWEEN KRISHNA AND ARJUNA  
ON DIVINE MATTERS.

A Sanscrit Philosophical Poem.

WITH A FEW INTRODUCTORY PAPERS.

BY

HURRYCHUND CHINTAMON,

POLITICAL AGENT TO HIS HIGHNESS THE GUICOWAR MULHAR RAO MAHARAJAH OF BARODA.

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LONDON :

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1874.

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TO  
THE FREEMASONS OF THE WORLD,

A HARMLESS AND KINDLY CRAFT,

THE PARTIZANS OF MORAL INDEPENDENCE AND MENTAL FREEDOM,  
WHOSE PURPOSE IT IS TO TEACH MIND TO STAND ALONE, UNFETTERED BY THE  
MOORINGS OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL, OR RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE,

THIS WORK,

AS A MARK OF HIGH ESTEEM AND FRATERNAL CONSIDERATION,

Is Dedicated,

BY THEIR HUMBLE BROTHER,

THE AUTHOR.



# THE FREEMASONS OF THE WORLD

A HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

OF THE RITUALS OF THE SEVERAL ORDERS, AND THE MENTAL TRAINING

WHICH THEY ARE TO BE HAD TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF MASTER

OF THE ORDER OF THE SEVEN KINGS OF THE EAST

## THIS WORK

IS A TRANSLATION OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

IN THE POSSESSION OF

THE GRAND LODGE OF THE SEVEN KINGS OF THE EAST

THE AUTHOR



Audax omnia perpeti,  
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.

*Hor., Carm. I. 3.*

The race of man, presumptuous enough to support everything, rushes on through forbidden wickedness.

---

Ἡ ἐτι βελτιον̄ θιμαι τον μεν λεγοντα αφες, ειτε χειρων ειη ειτε αμεινων ταδε  
λεγομενα σκοπει ειτε αληθη ειτε ψευδη λεγεται.

*Iamblicus, De Mysteriis, I. 1.*

Or, as I think better, dismissing all consideration of the speaker as to whether he be a good or a bad man, have regard only to the things spoken, as to whether they be true or false.







## PREFACE.

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“WHAT new thing is contained in this?” is the common question of those who are careless or incapable of understanding the importance of philosophical inquiry, when any work on the philosophy of religion is produced. There is no new thing contained in this work. The author of the sacred song, its subject, did but endeavour, as many before and after him, to raise the veil of ignorance and superstition from the heart of man, and so enable him to read the characters written there by Reason in her own fair hand. The old saying of the Greek sage, “Know thyself,” is here, as everywhere, all-important. Man, who finds delight in the reason of others, must find yet greater delight in his own—still greater delight in considering that its origin is from God, and that it is the only path by which to approach Him. As man, before he can love God, whom he has not seen, must love his brother, whom he has seen, so, before he can know and feel pleasure in God, he must know and feel pleasure in himself.

What little philosophy the reader may find in these pages is not that of Patanjali, or Epicurus, or Lucretius, or Kant, or Berkeley, or Cousin; let me call it the philosophy of common sense, and so appeal to all for its consideration. Its chief object is the cleansing of spiritual truth; for as in the material world gold and precious metals have at all times existed, but mixed with dross and dirt, and requiring purification in the furnace of the refiner, so spiritual truth has likewise always existed in the world of knowledge, but has ever been mixed at first with some debasing alloy of ignorance or superstition, which must be removed by the refining influence of Reason.

The whole dictionary of ancient religion is made up of metaphor. Polytheism is but the polyonymy of religion; mythology is the baby talk of religion. The fault is ours if we now misunderstand that early speaking of a child to a child.

Various successive religions answer the purpose of God in pro-



viding suitable meats for various digestions. Nor are the worshippers in every religion but one excluded from salvation.

The Indian pundits, from the age of Kapila, the modern Descartes, to that of Krishna Dwaipayana, whether they have been Nishvara or Seshvara, Charvaka, or the disciples of Atmabodha, care as little for the thirty-three millions of gods which people the Hindu Pantheon, as the educated ministers of the Church for the Saints of the Anglican Calendar. But the policy of priests in Asia, as in Europe, has ever been to hide knowledge from the vulgar, as nurses hide knives from children—not to throw pearls before swine, or that which is holy before dogs. In Hindustan, as in England, there are doctrines for the learned, and dogmas for the unlearned; strong meat for men, and milk for babes; facts for the few, and fictions for the many; realities for the wise, and romances for the simple; esoteric truth for the philosopher, and exoteric fable for the fool. The Chandala knows no more of Sanscrit than the French peasant of Latin, yet it is in these languages only that it is given to them respectively to know the mysteries of heaven,—in these, and in idle, if imposing, rites and ceremonies, and in profane and old wives' fables, against which Timothy was cautioned by Paul. Divine service may be divided, therefore, into knowledge of external fable or ceremony, and knowledge of internal fact or truth. The latter finds fit audience, though few; the disciples of the former are the world at large.

I need not, I think, warn those for whom this book is intended, not to reject as nonsense that which is merely new, or to consider that which is barbarous, therefore bad. I presume they will judge for themselves, like the old Beræans, whether these things are so; and if they are not, I shall at least have had the credit of assisting in the detection of error. Nor is the philosophy contained in this book difficult to understand. Its object is simply the removal of those mists of error which hide from man the beauty of his own spiritual nature; its end is to attract and reduce them to nothing by the warm, radiant light of Reason, in a time when the icy chains of error and superstition which have circled him so long and with so cold a clasp, are being fast melted by the increasing heat of education and intelligence.

The text, with the aid of the commentary, will, it is to be hoped, be



sufficiently plain. One or two observations only, which seemed out of place in the notes, may be made here.

First, it is worth while to remark that pithy climax of Arjuna's creed: after he has addressed Krishna as the formless form, mortal and immortal, indivisible and divisible, being and non-being, motion and rest, the great omnipresent and everlasting God, with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, he ends his hymn of praise with those sublime and impassioned words, "Thou All!" The "Bhagavad-Gítá" describes Him, in whom we live and move and have our being, and without whom nothing is, as the origin of all birth, death, might, wisdom, and goodness. It says He receives no one's virtue or vice; that is, it is a matter of indifference to the Supreme whether man or any other animal be what man calls good, or what man calls bad. It is the pride of humanity alone which considers itself worthy of the notice of God. David has the same idea when he says, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee;" or, as the Septuagint reads, *οτι των αγαθων μου ου χρεαν εχεις* ("Thou hast no need of my goodness")—an interpretation followed by the Vulgate and the Arabic, of a sentence which, according to Adam Clarke, no man can read without being confounded by it. Adam Clarke speaks of the Orthodox. It is a very simple sentence from any other point of view.

God in the "Bhagavad-Gítá" is **प्रजापति**, or Lord of all creatures; **जगन्नाथ**, or Master of the world; **स्तंभ**, scaffold or support; **हिरण्यगर्भ**, womb of gold or light; **विश्वकर्मा**, the Artist of the gods; **ज्योति**, **आकाश**, and **प्राण**, or light, ether, and life. He can only be known by him who has found that to know Him is impossible.

Creation is the power to evolve form, not to originate essence, as it is understood in the episode of the great Sanscrit poem, the **महाभारत**, or the "Iliad" of India. "*Ex nihilo nihil*" is an axiom of India as well as of Rome. The exercise of this creative power is called **माया**, and the world only appears real as the oyster-shell appears to be silver. This **माया** can only be conquered by Reason. The soul (**आत्मा**) is the mainspring of the watch, in which mind, understanding, and senses (**मानस**, **बुद्धि**, **इन्द्रिये**) are the directing and decreasing wheels.

The reader will notice especially the following opinions of philosophic latitudinarianism. Indifference to doctrines will be the result of



escape from delusion. God is to be worshipped without any religious form. In the end, as Paul preached to the Corinthians, God is to be all in all. The real philosophical Nirvana is to be the final state, after all vicissitude and misery, of everlasting and supreme repose. Knowledge is throughout represented as power, and the worst form of poverty as the poverty of wisdom. Learning is more than loveliness, more than hidden treasure, a companion and a consoler. It distinguishes between what is transitory and what is eternal, and so subdues sorrow; it shows the sturdy tree carried away by the flood which passes by the bending rush, and so prevents pride; it teaches that religious ceremony cannot alone absolve from sin. It is the path by which man may pass from the unreal to the real, from night to dawn, from death to immortality; it is the ladder which leads to God.

I have only, in conclusion, to add my obligations to Mr. J. C. Thomson, whose excellent translation of the "Bhagavad-Gítá" into English—the best that is known to me—I have taken the liberty of choosing as the subject of my Commentary; and to Mr. Brockie, from whom I have borrowed some excellent remarks. I have also had throughout in my book the assistance of a distinguished English scholar, whose modesty, I regret to say, forbids my rendering my work more valuable with his name.



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## QUESTIONS ON UNIVERSAL THEOLOGY.

SINCE my arrival in this country I have visited several places both of amusement and of instruction, and have been astonished at the stride of progress in both ; but in the department of self-improvement, or that department which is the most vital and fundamental to mankind, the religious instruction communicated to the public in several denominatory institutions has, in this civilized country, in no small degree surprised me, and I have been at a loss to understand the aims and objects of these institutes ; hence, I earnestly desire to be enlightened on the following few Questions :—

1. Is not God, the creator of the universe, one without a second ?
2. Does not the fatherhood of God establish the brotherhood of mankind ?
3. Is not mankind in all countries and nations virtually the same, though differing in form, colour, dress, and speech ?
4. Is not reason a natural gift to all, by which men are superior to other animals ?
5. Since reason has the quality of discrimination, does it not presuppose the existence of the evil of ignorance ?
6. On what grounds are the differences in belief to be defended ?
7. On what ground is the conclusive opinion of the sole authenticity of each to be supported, and how can the pride of its supporters be upheld ?
8. Should such beliefs be allowed to remain—sources, as they are, of hatred in humanity, and stagnation in progress ?
9. If universality of belief and nationalization are to be united, what means are best conducive to the attainment of this end ?



## MORAL PRECEPTS.

1. O MIND ! desires are bad, and lead to sin,  
Keep these without, and bind good thoughts within.
2. O Mind ! forsake desires, to truth adhere ;  
For from desire come sorrow, suffering, fear ;  
And who of men such fruits as these holds dear ?
3. O Mind ! away with anger, from which grew  
First grief ; away with lust, whose child is pain ;  
Away with pride and envy ; peace ensue,  
Sweet as in sultry tides the summer rain.
4. O Mind ! be constant always, and forbear  
Vain talk, which murders time, of talk the worst.  
O Mind ! let all your words be clean, and fair,  
And sweet, to satisfy the hearers' thirst.
5. O Mind ! how precious is good fame ! It is  
The ointment of sweet savour, like the wood  
Of the brown sandal tree, perfumed is this,  
Living for ever, and for ever good.
6. O Mind ! who in this world of woe  
Rests happy in hamlet or on throne ?  
Alas ! we reap what seed we sow ;  
The hands that smite us are our own.
7. O Mind ! be not afflicted, be not grieved ;  
Be not afraid, be not forlorn, O Mind !  
Peace is by reason in the heart received,  
By perfect reason grows rash man resigned.
8. O Mind ! One grieves for his brother's death, and he  
Dies ; loud ambition has no lodging here,  
Or should have none ; it fills the bond and free  
With rage and lean remorse and quaking fear,  
And guilt that ever looks behind, and lust,  
Those idle passions of the child of dust.



## THEOLOGICAL PROGRESS.

IN this civilized country, wherever I turn my eyes, I find all men progressing in various departments of the knowledge of the world called Science, and in the adaptation of this acquired knowledge to useful purposes for the comfort and convenience of man, that is labouring in the field of Art. Hence my inquiry, who or what is this that has been the source of this wonderful improvement or development? Is it some latent principle? Has any attention been paid to the search of what it is, whence it has come, and its action in this material world?

Experience has taught us that a human being is an organized creature, gifted with reason, an attribute possessing power to distinguish good from bad. Mr. Butler, in his "Analogy of Religion," says: "Reason is the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself; for if it contain clear immoralities or contradictions, either of these would prove it false;" and therefore the great poet, Milton, says, "Let truth and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

When it is universally acknowledged that there is but one God, the Creator, who is infinite and ever-existing,—is it possible for us mortals, children of a day, to tell definitely when the world was created, or to say that God gave one nation of the world certain dogmas and doctrines better than or different from those He gave to another—nay, to say He has been favourable to one and unfavourable to another? Can any reasonable man of any country pretend to affirm that he was born wise or perfect from his mother's womb? Can any reasonable man deny that ignorance is everywhere, and that it has been the chief cause of different faiths and worships in all nations?

The keynote of this essay is Action, or Progress, for the terms are convertible. I shall endeavour to prove that bodily and mental action exists everywhere and always. I shall then, at some little length, show the vast improvements which have been made from time to time in various countries, through the unfettered action of reason, in the different



departments of Art and Science. We shall then see how much man's comfort, happiness, and intelligence have been increased by these improvements; and I shall conclude by submitting whether Theology has been treated in like manner, and whether it is capable of being treated in like manner, and whether, being so treated, it admits of similar amelioration.

Looking about this world of ours, what is it that with the eyes of reflection we cannot fail to see? Action—action in earth, action in air, action in water, action in fire, action in animal life from its apex, man, to the lowest form of the zoophyte, which moves on the borders of vegetable existence, the fair sea flower with its tentacles never in repose; action in vegetable life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop which groweth against the wall; action even in mineral life there is, though we cannot see it with such weak eyes as ours, nor compute it by any system of human calculation. I will briefly describe the wonderful progress the intelligent principle in man has been able to work out in the different known sciences which we daily witness.

I will begin with Chemistry, or the investigation of the laws under which various elementary bodies have become the numerous compound substances we see in nature, and conversely of the means by which such compound substances can be resolved into their original or simple elements. It is only within the last hundred years that Chemistry has risen to the rank of a science; but during that period it has advanced towards perfection with a rapidity unparalleled in the history of philosophy; and why? Because reason has met with no restraint, and action, the essence of man's existence, with no check or antagonism. What has Chemistry done for us? There is no science so immediately conducive to human comfort. To whatever art or manufacture we turn our attention, we find that it has been either wholly created by Chemistry, or owes it some of its most important improvements. I will not add any remarks on chemical attraction, the laws of combination and decomposition, the atomic theory, observations on acids, salts, metallic oxides, earths and alkalies, with which most of my readers are doubtless more or less familiar; but I will endeavour to show how indispensable is Chemistry, as I have before remarked, to the comfort of man.

Agriculture, which may be considered the most important of all arts,



is radically dependent on Chemistry. Without a knowledge of the constitution of his soils and his crops, the properties of the materials which are required to enrich his field, and the action of the atmosphere and the light of the all-seeing Sun, that "soul of the world," what would be the condition of the husbandman? And are not all these subjects, and many more equally necessary, explained to him at large in the pages of Chemistry? Baking, brewing, distilling, and indeed all operations by which food is prepared, are in general a series of processes of Chemistry. The manufacture of pottery, porcelain, glass, paper (and who shall deny their use?), the operations of bleaching, dyeing and calico printing, the preparation of soap, gunpowder, ink, salt, drugs, perfumery, and a thousand other articles in daily, nay hourly, demand,—what are these but fruits sprung from seeds sown by the chemist's hand? Almost the whole circle of manufacturing industry has its centre in his laboratory. True, that some of these processes are more strictly termed mechanical—as, for instance, the conversion of flax into broadcloth, and clay into pottery; still, in these there is the same blending, though not to so great an extent, of chemical appliances as in the making of glass from proper proportions of sand, potash, and lime, of the conversion of common salt into soda, of hides into leather, and of charcoal, sulphur, and saltpetre into gunpowder, that terrible agent for good and for evil.

In the subject of analysis, or separation of a whole into its elements or component parts, Chemistry has been the means of dispelling mystery, and producing satisfaction as to the nature and composition of material substances, and their adaptability to the use of man.

Very early, in India, philosophers turned their attention to man, and analyzed the human system. They found that the soul, which exists in the innermost part of the body, has certain integuments, and is, in fact, an intelligent principle capable of knowing itself and things around it. These integuments are five\*—viz., food, vital air, mind, knowledge, and joy. First, the outside, solid and massive, consisting of flesh and bones; this has no intelligent sense, and therefore cannot have knowledge of self or things about it. Second, an inner layer, the vital air. This again can have no such knowledge, for when a man sleeps his body is at perfect

\* अन्नमयकोश, प्राणमयकोश, मनोमयकोश, विज्ञानमयकोश, आशि आनंदमयकोश.



rest, and the vital air is only in action in a state of inhalation and exhalation ; but in this state, if another man were to remove a part of his dress or take money from his pocket, the sleeping man would not be conscious of it, and therefore has no knowledge of things about him. Third, the next inner covering is the mind, which is also devoid of this knowledge ; for experience has taught us that mind is a place where every imaginative idea takes its rise, and according to the decision arrived at there, the organs of the body are either propelled into action or allowed to remain at rest, and as it is the most swift and irresolute, so also is it the most uncertain and defective. The fourth inner covering is individualization, or self-sufficiency. It is an arrogance which has always a mistaken view, and is followed, as pride in the English proverb, by a fall. Fifth, the last covering is joy, or vainglory, which is always momentary, and brings on sufferings and misery. But beyond all these is the soul—the seat of contemplation, tranquillity, and peace. To comprehend this scientific truth, man must extricate himself from worldly illusion, and for this mind requires prayer or labour for knowledge.

I go on to consider Astronomy—that grand science which explains the nature and motions of the bodies filling infinite space, including our own tiny world in its comparatively unimportant character of a planet, or member of the solar system. What a vast progress has been made in this, from the first presumption of ignorance, the crude conception of a fixed sphere, with an outer sphere, forming the heavens, revolving round it once in twenty-four hours ! That vain conception made this globe which we inhabit the most important and central object of a mighty whole ; while the Sun, more than a million times the size of our earth, and other stars of equal or greater magnitude—“suns innumerable by numbers that have name”—were supposed to be small and insignificant lights formed solely for our comfort or convenience. It was long before the present system was generally admitted. Galileo was not the only martyr of reason and humility who suffered at the hands of ignorance and wounded pride. But had not such men as Galileo and Herschel and Newton arisen and laboured for the truth in spite of popular obloquy, our notion of the sidereal system would still be the elementary one of the “Iliad.” Science and Art walk now hand in hand. The astronomer,



aided by the telescope of the philosophical mechanician, penetrates the regions of infinite space, while, with every improvement in his instruments, he discovers a new system of revolving worlds, each ruling body separated from the other by a distance which the mind of man may in some instances measure, but in none conceive.

Astronomy has been rendered so familiar at the present day by the unimpeded progress of education, that every child can construct a solar system, with its orbits, Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, the asteroides, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus, with the diameters of these planets, their comparative densities, their distances from the central Sun, and the time of their periods of revolution round it. Now our own solar system, inconceivably vast as it is, is but an item of this heavenly inventory. Similar systems, discovered by the telescope of Herschel, are here and there suspended in the blue inane, star-dust of the Empyrean, each particle of which would doubtless, under stronger telescopic power, develop into a sun. Yet all this and more forms now part of the common education of our schools. What a new insight is here given of the omnipotence of the Supreme Being! In our prayers we call him "Almighty" and "Omnipotent"—terms which by frequent use have come to signify nothing, or nothing clear. What a new meaning is imparted to those familiar words when we know that the farthest and most filmy speck which the most powerful telescope can descry, is but a mass of mighty worlds melted by distance into a dim light, yet comprising individualities as perfect and at the same time as progressive in their natures as our own! What mean those spots which loom on the horizon of every new instrument? Are they not glimpses of some far infinitude beyond—a glorious land, of which those specks are but the outlying and subservient sentinels? The astronomer, using his six-feet mirror, feels as the child, with but another ignorance, the ignorance of knowledge, the knowledge of how much we do not know—the highest form of knowledge here allowed us—and gazes on those dim distant mysterious lights with hopeless wonder and ever-increasing awe. The mind of man shrinks on the threshold of the unattainable. That cloudy spot in Orion is a majestic collection of stars lying at the verge of what is known. If those distant lights resemble at all that cloudy spot, their systems are situated so deep in space that no ray from them could reach our earth till after travelling



through intervening abysses during centuries from whose computation even imagination shrinks back abashed !

I turn to Geology. Geology is the science which treats of the materials composing the earth's crust, their arrangement, and the causes of their arrangement. This science may rank next in importance to that of Astronomy. The materials of the earth's crust are varied, but invariably known by the name of rocks. By considering the remains imbedded in them, the geologist counts the age of our world. The merest tyro can now distinguish between strata of granite, marble, sandstone, and coal. Obeying the laws of attraction and gravitation, acted on by electrical and chemical agencies, worn down by winds, frosts, rains, and rivers, borne seaward and strewn in layers beneath the waters, and upheaved again by earthquakes and volcanoes, these strata are ever being displaced and altered, and are no exception to that law of action which, as I said, regulates and informs the world. But each alteration of material encloses some relic of vitality. As men in this country place coins under their mighty buildings, to show their successors their age and history, so Nature places her records, too ; and these are the tests or types of the earth's conditions during their enclosure. The ocean has encroached on the land ; land emerged from the ocean ; fixed hills were once the tiny sandstones on the shore ; and seas roll their waters over the surface of ancient continents. All is action and never-ceasing change. Millions of animals, birds, beasts, and fishes lived and died on this little planet millions of years before man was.

Much that I have said of these sciences may be also applied to those of Botany, Mineralogy, and Zoology, about which sciences a varied collection of treatises and samples is stored up in the gardens and the museums of this great city. From the close observation of these, any thinking man will find that here also is action and never-ceasing change.

Considering these facts and others like them, we can scarcely forbear smiling at the pride of man, who imagines this fair world created for himself alone, and formerly, as I have already said, imagined it the centre of the vast sidereal system of the universe. It is his world, forsooth—this fair world, which flourished in illustrious glory and beauty long ages before his entrance into it, and will probably continue so to flourish long after every trace of him has perished out of creation.



The application of the laws of motion and progress to objects in nature, or contrivance in arts, constitutes that branch of natural philosophy usually treated under the head of mechanics. The original signification of the word "machine," as most are now aware, is simply "art," or the means of bringing about an effect. How widely machines have assisted progress, and brought about comfort to mankind, is known both in Hydrostatics, Hydraulics, Pneumatics, and many other subjects. But the greatest triumph of mechanism is the steam-engine—the engine *par excellence*, which depends on the properties of water and heat alone for its gigantic power. The action of steam in producing motion was known probably as early as 130 B.C. The instrument called the *Æolipyle*, described by Hero of Alexandria, may be considered the original of our present steam-engine. My readers must not be frightened at the name; the thing is, I believe, very familiar to them all. It is to be seen, under a different title, indeed, in most of the chemist's windows and in toy shops of the present day, described as a novel invention—a novelty which dates back more than 2,000 years! So true is it, as Solomon said, that there is nothing new under the sun. You observe a small glass globe, with two arms or cylindrical tubes attached to it, open at the end. In this globe water is introduced, and on applying heat below the globe gradually rotates, at first slowly, afterwards more and more swiftly, through the steam, which beats like a paddle-wheel upon the air. The ingenious Mr. Rimmel, of the Strand, has, I believe, patented what he calls a "Steam Vaporizer," for diffusing perfume. The eye of Science sees in this novel invention nothing but the *Æolipyle*, which is, as I have said, at least as old as Hero of Alexandria—that is, nearly 2,000 years of age. Between this and the ingenious instrument of the Marquis of Worcester in 1663, what a number of centuries elapsed, during all which period the steam-engine was biding its time to be born. The attempts, and successful attempts, of the priesthood to press down the free minds of men for their own profit—to restrict the wide province of reason—to solder firmly, and yet more firmly, about the wings of intellect the fetters of ignorance and superstition,—these were the principal causes that so great a benefit to humanity lay for so long a time in darkness and unknown. But after the bold book of the Marquis of Worcester, that darkness was rapidly to be dispelled. The celebrated



Frenchman, Papin, improved the improvement of Worcester, and Newcomen and Cawley, in 1713, improved the improvement of Papin. Here a little and there a little, here a line and there a line, the steam-engine grew. It was not, as some of us unacquainted with the gradual progress of both art and nature are apt to imagine, a sudden inspiration of Watt. No; Watt only added one conception—that of condensing the steam without cooling the cylinder; but this conception was so important that all the other details of the engine, as we now see it, were of comparatively easy introduction. It would be hopeless to attempt to give in an article like the present any clear explanation of the mechanism of the steam-engine—probably my readers are already well acquainted with it; but I will add one word as to its importance.

Statisticians reckon the quantity of steam power now employed in Great Britain alone as more than 3,000,000-horse power—an amount of animal force which could never in reality be brought into operation without extensive derangement of our whole economic system. It is beyond the strength of my feeble words to express a tithe of the advantages resulting from its use; but I can and will ask you to look round about the habitable world, and see for yourselves the numerous applications of this mighty mechanical power, considered simply with reference to those lines of iron which intersect almost every portion of our globe. It is here, indeed, that enchanted carpet, the chariot of Eastern fable, which transports a man in a few moments, without any trouble on his own part, whithersoever he would go. But consider steam power as applied to automatic factory labour, steam printing, by which knowledge is diffused through the globe, mining, and a hundred other arts. And all this mighty force, which has raised the industrial arts to such a height, and continues every day to raise them higher—which has saved, and still continues to save, more and more of toil, sorrow, labour, and tears, to which theologians tell us we men, though innocent, are born, and which economizes for us so greatly our time, which is here so short;—all this mighty force, this stupendous application of intellectual power, of unchained reason contributing so much to human progress, may be readily managed by the instructed hand of a little child.

Only one more instance, and I have done. It was observed in ancient time that when amber was rubbed, it acquired a power of attracting and



repelling such light bodies as hair and feathers ; this power came afterwards to be known as electricity. None of the ancients, however, investigated the subject methodically, none attempted the generalization of facts into a scientific theory. It was here, as it was with the *Æolipyle* of Hero of Alexandria, in which the steam-engine of modern time lay for so long dormant. In this subject Dr. Gilbert, an English physician, occupies the place which the Marquis of Worcester occupied with respect to steam power. In 1600 he showed that not only amber, but other bodies possessed the property I have alluded to ; he made, in fact, the first step towards a generalization by the observation of facts. Baconian induction was now fairly started, and Boyle, Newton, and others added each his quota. In the middle of the eighteenth century Benjamin Franklin disarmed the angry gods of half their power by identifying lightning with electricity.

I cannot here enter into a consideration of the voltaic electricity of Galvani or the thermo-electricity of Professor Seebeck, of Berlin. But the grandest application of electricity is known as the magnetic electricity of Faraday. That philosopher first succeeded in causing the loadstone to produce a current of electricity of exactly the same kind as that produced by the chemical actions of the voltaic circle ; and thus a common magnet took the place of the cumbrous apparatus of zinc, copper, and corrosive liquid.

And now I come to the Electric Telegraph—the most wonderful and successful application of Electro-magnetism that has yet been made. From the simple principle that an electric current can pass along a conducting wire to any distance, and move a magnetic needle at any point of its course, messages are now conveyed between continents with the speed of lightning ; and Puck's boast of putting a girdle round the earth in forty minutes, which seemed in Shakespeare's time the work of a god, has now been placed within the easy reach of a woman by the aid of Faraday and Galvani. Not this only. That medical electricity which consoles the sufferer in many a nervous disease, is the electricity of Faraday. At the point of Dungeness, and from the noble Pharos of La Heve, a fair white light flashes across the waste of waters and satisfies the anxious longing of the watchful sailor. What but the electricity of Faraday has created this salutary shine ?



In all these subjects I have endeavoured to show the force of action. Action is the best prayer, and does it not meet with the highest reward? It is, indeed, through this prayer of intellectual labour that we are made really acquainted with the wonder, beauty, and wisdom of God.

There is, I say, progress in all these matters; but what progress have we made in the most vitally important of them all? How, when, and where has the touchstone of Science been applied to Theology? Scarcely at all, in any place or at any time, has it felt that touch of celestial temper—a touch as light but as powerful, as silent but as effective, as the touch of the spear of Ithuriel on the toad which squatted in Paradise close at the ear of Eve. I ask, why is not the spirit of Science applied to Theology, as to other less important subjects of human interest? That method which has succeeded so excellently with gases, is it not worth trying whether it may not succeed equally well with gods? Why should our reason with regard to this domain only be rendered unfruitful? Why should it lie, with regard to this only, in a dark and narrow room? Are we for ever easily to take on trust, confidently repeat, and willingly be satisfied with false explanations of what we do not understand? Though this subject be to us of the last importance, not here alone, but everywhere, religion is universally undeveloped. Why? For want of action, and not ascertaining the nature of that action. I here quote a verse from an Hindu writer on Philosophy. I shall first present it in the vernacular, and then give its translation:—

॥ कर्म करोवे कासया साठी मुख्य व्हावी भगवद्देटी ॥

॥ दग्ध व्हावी हृदय गाठी प्रयोजन हे कर्मेचं ॥

“A knot of ignorance binds all men’s hearts,  
This action looses, and God’s grace imparts.”

Let each man—be he Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsee, or of any other faith—ask this question of himself: whether in any one of these multifarious beliefs, dogmatical or doctrinal, the religious actions that he performs, are in any way to untie the knot of ignorance and produce satisfaction? A wise man, on reflection, will say, No. We have here the answer of social philosophy and of religion to a question of the most vital importance to man. Let me make one more quotation *à propos* of



the proper subject of action, from that ancient language of India, the Aryan, or the Sanscrit :—

॥ पठंतु सर्वे शास्त्राणि सर्वे दैवत पूजनम् ॥

॥ आत्मज्ञानं विना पार्थ सर्व कर्म निरर्थकम् ॥

“Study all Scriptures written, near or far ;

Worship all images and saints of earth ;

But if you do not study who you are,

All your best actions are nothing worth.”

How many lectures might be delivered on such a sentence as this alone ! how many passages compared in how many languages, from the Greek *Γνωθι σεαυτον* of Chilo to the modern aphorism of Pope,—

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

But everywhere is stagnation ; stagnation in a world of action, of restless oceans, and rivers which flow eternally. Still on the murky pool of Theology floats the green infected slime of superstition. Is it not time for an angel to come down and trouble the waters of this spiritual Bethesda—now, alas ! an useless puddle or a fever-breeding morass ? What is the one thing wanting which has hitherto rendered all attempts to purify Theology abortive ? What but active coalition ? Are we to consider fortuitous and superficial difference of creed, colour, or costume, any bar to an entrance into this mighty union ? Ought such a bar to be found in the arrogance of visible conversion, by baptism or other means, from one believed dogmatic religion to another ; or, in other words, in the consideration of the superiority of one religion over another ; nay, more, in the belief that one religion—our own, of course—is true, and the word of God ; while all others, of which, perhaps, we scarcely understand even the language in which they are conveyed, are yet pronounced false, and the words of devils ? But men have been, in all ages, prone to superstition ; they have been always ready and willing to adopt opinions, handed down to them by their ancestors, the results of uninquiring prejudice.

I have now shown the continuous advance in a few of those numerous arts and sciences which enlighten and adorn our present existence. I have endeavoured also to show that in the most important of all parts of



knowledge, in the science of Theology, no progress has been made all these many years—absolutely none. And why? Because free inquiry has been foolishly enervated by fear, and the wide range of reason for ever hitherto restricted by superstition. Are we to infer that there have been no Galileos, no Newtons, no Watts, no Faradays and others, in religion only? In this subject alone, out of all the subjects of human knowledge, have there been at no time men who ventured to emancipate their minds from sacerdotal dominion, and to think for themselves? We know well there have been some in all ages and in all countries; but their tale is few. I scarcely need explain the reason: they had to give up all that is most dear to the human heart—riches, fame, comfort—and to receive, in return for their brave attempts to benefit their fellows, poverty, hard words, and suffering. Few are such heroes as Acosta, who was tortured eighteen times by the Inquisition, and died in the deepest deprivation and despair, for his attempts to do away with some of those gross fallacies by which the priests of the Church of Rome batten on the flesh of the flock which they say has been by God committed to their charge.

Such earnest men, however, as Acosta have left their mark. They have been the real holy army of martyrs in the ranks of the religion of Reason. They dared to proclaim their views, but for those views the time had not yet arrived. At the present enlightened period a man may fearlessly state what seems to him to be right, and just, and true; and his arguments will, I doubt not, invariably meet with polite attention, if not with perfect approval.



## INTRODUCTION.

IN the present age of inquiry, enlightenment, and progress, men have begun to open their eyes to the fact that though human nature is liable to err, it is also liable to improve, not in one subject alone, but in all subjects ; and to such improvement no limit has been assigned.

The subject to which I wish to draw my readers' attention is the "Bhagavad-Gítá," a philosophical poem of the Mahabharat, the great epic of India. In that noble poem is represented, under a fair veil of allegory, the conflict of purity with jealousy, of soul with matter ; of matter which is liable to succumb to temptation, and of soul which is endowed with the capacity of fighting against, and of overcoming it.

Before entering upon the poem itself, I will premise a few words about its philosophy. Philosophy is difficult to define. It is not easy to crystallize the many floating meanings of that word held in the solution of popular conception. It is best perhaps, after all, to have recourse to its etymology—though etymology so often is a will-of-the-wisp instead of a salutary guide—and declare it to be, as Pythagoras declared it of old, "the love of knowledge."

"Are there in your country no wise men?" asked Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, of that great traveller. "No," answered Pythagoras, "we are not wise, but simply the lovers of wisdom." Is it not strange that the Sanscrit word for philosophy, *gygnassa*, expresses, etymologically, exactly the same thing? Such is the tradition concerning the origin of this term. But may it not be said that the word philosophy resolves itself, after all, in simple language, into common sense ; since sense or reason, the common gift of all rational beings, has the inherent quality of distinguishing good from bad? Is not this sense the base or origin of all human enactments and innovations? Nay, is it not the very guide of all public and private judicature, as well in the routine of every-day life as in all social transactions of the world?

It is difficult to give an exact date to the "Bhagavad-Gítá," as, indeed, to most other early Sanscrit compositions. The history of the majority of nations may be divided, from one point of view, into three great epochs, which, however, run into one another, as the light and darkness



of the evening twilight, and yet are as distinct as night and day. These ages are—(1) The Age of Barbarism, (2) The Age of Mysticism, (3) The Age of Inquiry. I shall say a few words on each of these heads:—

1. In the Age of Barbarism or ignorance, Man, to support existence, his first and most natural desire, became a husbandman or shepherd. In these states, in the one as in the other, he felt his dependence on Nature—I should rather say, on sun, wind, and rain. Rain, to cause his seed to swell, buried in the ground, and to cool his flock in the hot months of summer; wind, to counteract the excess of rain, whether on his sheep or in his land; sun, the life-giving warmth, without which, instinct told him, it would be equally impossible for his sheep and himself to live, as for his corn to grow. But sun, wind, and rain were beyond his power; therefore, they were imagined and believed to be gods. How was he to obtain their gifts? Reasoning from analogy, he concluded, by presents and by flattery; in other words, by sacrifice and by prayer. It only remained for his simple mind to ask that great question which was asked so early, and has been answered a hundred times in a hundred ways, and still never yet been answered—"Whence and whither?" Whence do we come, whither do we go? His answer, untutored, was the same as that of a later age. "I go, I know not whither; I know not whence I came," has ever been the answer of the philosopher, as the answer of the vulgar has ever been, "The Great Spirit God, Brahma, Jehovah, Alla, etc., he made us, and to him we return." Such is the simple religion of Barbarism: the worship of the elements and the Great Spirit.

2. The Age of Mysticism.—Man was contented with such a worship in his childhood; but when what is called civilization introduced various trades and occupations, that same ignorance of science and love of profit which had induced him to make gods of sun, wind, and rain, induced him to add other gods to these. The origin of Polytheism lies before us. The soldier sacrificed to Mars, the god of war; the sailor to Neptune, the god of waters. Even the thief had his Laverna, the goddess of what he would call abstraction. This age of manifold creation is the age of Poetry, which, being interpreted, is simply making; and that practical spirit which made has done much to preserve the thing made. How often has



the sweet mystic poetry of religion caused a belief in it to linger in those minds—more especially in the highly sensitive minds of women, the great supporters of faith—which have discarded other prejudices, under the guidance of understanding! Poetry touches sun, wind, and rain with her mystic hand, and covers those three gods with a hundred attributes and a hundred names, while early reason maintains that the chief cause is one. Hence is the phenomenon of a Trinity in Unity—a doctrine by no means confined to Christian faith, but existing in nearly every religion of the world; an attempt to reconcile reason with poetry, which startles the mathematician and is the bulwark of the divine. But the gods have grown more numerous in this age, as men have become less content. They are no more satisfied with the pleasures of this world, think no longer its pain and sorrow sufficient for them. They create—or rather, allow priests, for their own profit, to create—something else to frighten man into the worship of the objects of an ideal idolatry.

3. The Age of Inquiry.—In this age men first began to doubt the certainty of their early belief, and suspect the honesty of their priests; in a word, to think for themselves. Common sense began to trample over superstition. This period is the age of controversy, for it is full of attempts to reconcile the great with those small gods. The latter created forms of religion, the former universities of philosophy.

I do not mean to say that every nation has passed through these stages of development, any more than I mean to say that every man has passed through the three stages of the physical or intellectual life of man. Some die in youth, some in middle, and some in old age; just as some pass their whole existence in childish credulity, others go so far as scepticism, while but comparatively few attain the stage of rational belief.

All worship is essentially and grossly selfish. The three gods, Sun, Rain, and Wind, constituted a Trinity, of which the Sun was the principal, and as such is introduced into the Gayatri, or the holiest verse of the Vedas, which cannot be uttered to ears profane, but is recited only mentally, which, indeed, is considered the most pious worship:—

ओम् भू, भुव, स्वः तत् सवितुर वरुणं भरगो देवस्य धी मही धियो योनः प्रचोदयात्

“ Lord of earth, air, and heaven, we meditate on that excellent light of the sacred Sun; may he illuminate our minds!” The word “Om,” which,



it may be said, in mystic meaning, nearly corresponds with the Hebrew *יהוה*, was the monosyllable with which all the hymns of the Vedas, and afterwards all works which treated of Theology, were commenced. It is composed of the three letters, "a," "u," and "m," the "a" and "u" combining to form the sound "o." The Hindus look upon it as a vocal representation of the Supreme Being, in His triune character of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the Universe. Thus the "a" is said to represent Vishnu, the Preserver; the "u," Shiva, the Destroyer; and the "m," Bramah, the Creator. A more probable origin is, that it is composed of the initials of the three personifications of the triad of elements, which is a much more ancient Trinity than that of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The "a" would then represent Agni (or fire), the "u" Varuna (water), and the "m" Marut (wind or air).

The composition of the "Bhagavad-Gítá" is attributed to the Vyasa, the appellation of the same person who is said to have composed the Vedas and Puranas. As I have above remarked, a difficulty exists about its date. One, the great difficulty about the classical literature of India is the absence of all chronological data—all data, I mean, which may with any confidence be relied on.

The subject is more conspicuous for philosophy than poetry, though it is not deficient in either. It is in form a dialogue; but Sanjaya has by far the greatest share of talk. He is the Suta (charioteer or bard) of the blind Dhritarashtra, the brother of Pándu. These two brothers were the head members of a warrior family, a tribe called Kshatriya.

To make the subject more intelligible, I will first shortly explain what caste or tribe in India means. The philosophical or true origin of caste is widely opposed to the popular notion of its origin. The philosophic minds of ancient India observed that mechanical contrivances for the convenience of man were generally modelled on portions of his own structure. Carrying out this idea, they considered man as a composite whole, made up of head, arms, belly, and feet; the first expressing knowledge; the second, force; the third, cultivation; and the fourth, slavery. Health, they said, is maintained by the united action of these, which are indeed incapable, or less capable, of separate action. After this system of division in the human body, they divided



the social body into those well-known four divisions—viz., first, Brahmins (or priests), whose duty was the study and teaching of religion; second, Kshatriyas (or warriors), whose duty was government and the subjection of one's enemies—in short, the protection, internal and external, of one's country; third, Vaisyas (or merchants), whose duty was commerce and agriculture; and fourth, Sudras (or slaves), whose duty was faithful service of their masters. The division into castes is as distinct in this Western country as in India, only here it is not openly acknowledged, and bears no name. Regard was paid in this division to the various tendencies of the body politic, and not to birth, as is generally now imagined. Indeed, common experience shows that persons of the same family have, by no means, always the same tendencies. The original sense, like the sense of other philosophy, has been perverted by the pride and ignorance of man; and this perversion, like other perversions, has created wide confusion, and been the greatest and most enduring bar to social progress.

Dhritarāshtra, the head of the elder branch of the family, had one hundred sons, called "Kuru," or, in Mahratti, कुरौव, from कैवारी, espouser; and Pāndu, the head of the younger branch, had five sons, called "Pāndavas." The latter were banished from Hastinapura, the ancient Delhi, by their old blind uncle, Dhritarāshtra, at the persuasion of his own son, Duryodhana (evil-disposed), the eldest of one hundred sons. In consequence of the banishment and the privation to which they were reduced, Krishna, their bosom friend, mediated between the two members of the family, and requested the elder branch to restore some portion of the sovereignty and income to the younger, oppressed and ill-treated. But the haughty and arrogant elder answered that not so much as might be contained in a needle's eye should be allowed to his brothers. Krishna then advised the oppressed Pāndavas to declare war, since he knew well that both parties were excellently trained in arms, and that the oppressed had made itself famous, as better skilled in that art than the other. Krishna was a common friend of the Kuru family, and believed to be divinely gifted, and held in high estimation by all its members. It is said in the Mahabharat that when the members, Duryodhana and Arjuna, one of each branch, went to Krishna to ask his assistance, he was asleep; then the son of the elder brother, Duryodhana,



chose a place at his head, as the more honourable, and also to be seen first; and the son of the younger, Arjuna, at his feet. Krishna, however, awakening suddenly, naturally saw Arjuna first. Here he found himself for a short time in a difficulty, owing to his inability to act so as to satisfy both. He, however, soon devised a plan, by suggesting that he would divide himself thus: viz., his whole army on one side, and himself alone, without any armour, on the other, and they should take their choice. Whereupon Duryodhana preferred the army, and Arjuna accepted Krishna alone on his side. With this division, an open war took place. The hostile armies of the two brothers are met on the plain, Kuru Kshetra, क्षेत्र, a strip of land between the Indus, the Ganges, and the Himalaya range. A certain Bhíshma leads the band of the Kuru, while Bhíma is the general on the other side. The scene of the poem, the battle-field, never changes. Bhíshma gives the signal by blowing his shell, which salute is returned by Arjuna, for whom Krishna is filling the post of charioteer. The fight begins with a flight of arrows. Then Arjuna is brought by Krishna, at his own desire, into the place between the two armies. While he examines the lines of the enemy, he is suddenly struck with the number of friends and relatives he is about to do his best to destroy. He is overcome with a strange revulsion of feelings, and sits down on the bench of his chariot. Krishna exhorts him with the arguments which form the didactic and philosophical portion of this work, and endeavours to persuade him that he is mistaken in his conceptions. Arjuna is eventually overruled; the fight goes on, and he obtains a complete victory.

The whole work has been divided into three sections, each of six chapters, the first purely practical, the second theological, and the third metaphysical.

Now, all this beautiful poem is but an allegory, which I will at once endeavour to explain. It would have been impossible, without understanding the literal sense, to arrive at a conception of the remote and foreign meaning. It was for this reason that I made some few preliminary remarks with regard to the literal signification of the poem. It is applied as an allegory to illustrate Theology, or the Philosophy of Religion, by fable, which equally attracts the uneducated and commends itself to the wise. Fables and parables—those favourite methods of



communicating instruction at all times and in all countries—what are these but allegories? In these the mystical intention is called the moral; an allegory too dark or intricate becomes the well-known enigma or riddle. In the allegory presented by the “Bhagavad-Gítá” there is one uniform and consistent set of ideas; it does not “begin with a tempest and end with a fire”—an expression of Quintillian, the noted Roman critic, for denoting that which is forced or unnatural in this species of figurative rhetoric.

When the key is given, the allusion becomes at once plain and evident; and, what is more, the key which I venture to present will, I think, unfasten every locked door in this poem which shuts out comprehension. Allegories have indeed entered, I may say, into all religions. After all, may not religion itself be called an allegory? What is religion? what prayer? what worship? asks a disciple. The philosopher replies, The true and the etymological signification of the word religion is “that which binds back.” It is the sense of duty which man feels from the relation in which he stands to some superior power. It is not mere belief in certain dogmas and doctrines, at all times to be found in all nations of the world. Prayer means necessary labour to acquire spiritual knowledge; for labour is the lot of man, and by it alone all sciences and arts are cultivated, duties performed, and fulfilment of desires brought about. It is not a mere repetition of words and sentences; for the discretionary quality of reason necessitates labour to distinguish truth from falsehood, and virtue from vice. God has left nothing unsupplied to man. He is provided with reason within to guide him, and without with every necessary provision to support him and render him happy. It rests entirely with himself to work out his own true end. Worship means unflinching mental culture in the experience gained or knowledge acquired in truth and virtue; for how often does man forget and allow himself to be tempted to evil, by which he suffers, and at times resolves never to subject himself to it again! The rise of such pure and unalloyed ideas in the mind of man is considered, in the Eastern philosophical language, the virgin birth, the incarnation of God; Krishna, Christ, and others, as man in man.

By the two families, Kurus and Pándavas, of one tribe, are to be understood those of Passion and Intelligence, of the one tribe of man-



kind which is called Kshatriya, from being endowed with a warrior element, the spiritual essence Reason. The microcosm man, just as the larger world, is for ever the battle-field of vice and deceit against truth and virtue. Man is born undeveloped ; vice and deceit obstruct the gates of Intelligence. The moral principle also is held in a state of siege. Arjuna represents mind, his chariot represents the body, his charioteer, Krishna, represents reason.

The spot, I have already said, where the fight occurred, was called the sacred place (Kuru kshetra). Now places and rivers are considered sacred in India, on account of wise and learned men resorting or residing there, both for quiet meditation and free bathing in the early morning, which, in warm countries, is thought very essential, both in a physical and religious point of view. Pilgrimages were and are undertaken to such places for the ostensible purpose of religious benefit, but really for the sake of the wisdom which might be obtained by coming in contact with the wise men residing there. From this grew the Sanscrit proverb—

॥ अन्यक्षेत्रे कृतं पापं, पुण्यक्षेत्रे विनशति ॥

॥ पुण्यक्षेत्रे कृतं पापं, वज्रलेपो भविशति ॥

The commission of sin elsewhere is destroyed at a sacred place ; but the commission of sin at a sacred place becomes doubly strong—i.e., he who remained ignorant with the chance of improving himself is doubly ignorant and miserable. The sentence may be compared with that of the Christian Scriptures, having the same metaphorical meaning, “ All sin may be forgiven, but sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven.” The birth of a human being is the highest field (क्षेत्र) for a being in the whole creation, for he alone has the noble gift, reason, for his guidance to free him from temptation ; but if he does not take advantage of it, he subjects himself to all the miseries of the world.

### LIFE.

LIFE is a river ; Duty its sacred shrine ;  
 Courage its shore ; and Truth its silver tide ;  
 Its waves Compassion ; in it the soul divine,  
 Like the body in other streams, is purified ;  
 But midst the reeds the cayman lies in wait,  
 Error ; beware, rash mortal, ere too late.



# BHAGAVAD - GÍTÁ.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

### TEXT.

DHRITARÁSHTRA SPOKE.

What did my followers and those of Pándu do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain, the plain of Kuru, Sanjaya ?

### COMMENTARY.

### POPULAR OPINION.

When a man of inquiring mind comes forward on the stage of this world to think for himself, how is he situated in society ?

### TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

When king Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pándavas drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor, and spoke these words : "Behold, O preceptor ! this huge army of the sons of Pándu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada. In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bhíma and Arjuna in battle (namely) Yuyudhána and Viráta, and Drupada on his great car ; Dhrishtaketu, Chekitána, and the valiant king of Káshi ; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaivya, chief of men ; and Yudhámanyu the strong, and Uttamaujas the brave, the son of Subhadrá, and all the sons of Draupadí, too, in their huge chariots. But remark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O best of Bráhmans ! I will name them to thee, that thou mayst know them.



“There are thyself, and Bhíshma, and Karna, and Kripa, victorious in battle, Ashwattháman, and Vikarna, and Saumadatti too, and many other heroes, who risk their lives for my sake, armed with divers weapons, all experienced in war. This army of mine, which is commanded by Bhíshma, is not sufficient; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bhíma, is sufficient. And do you, even all of you, drawn up in all the ranks of the army, according to your grades, attend even to Bhíshma.”

Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus blew his trumpet, sounding loud as the roar of a lion. Then, on a sudden, trumpets, kettle-drums, cymbals, drums, and horns were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar. And standing on a huge car drawn by white horses, the slayer of Madhu, and the son of Pándu blew their celestial trumpets. Krishna (blew his horn called) Páñchajanya; the Despiser of Wealth blew “the Gift of the Gods;” he of dreadful deeds and wolfish entrails blew a great trumpet called Paundra; king Yudhishthira, the son of Kuntí, blew “the Eternal Victory;” Nakula and Sahadeva blew “the Sweet-toned” and the “Blooming-with-jewels.” The king of Káshi, renowned for the excellence of his bow, and Shikandin, in his huge chariot, Dhrishtadyumna, and Viráta and Sátyaki, unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadí, altogether, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadrá, each severally blew their trumpets. That noise lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritaráshtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhártaráshtras drawn up, and that the flying of arrows had commenced, he raised his bow, and then addressed these words, O king of earth! to Krishna.

“Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One! between the two armies, that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, (and see) with whom I have to fight in the strife of war. I perceive that those who are assembled here are about to fight, from a wish by so doing to do a favour to the evil-minded son of Dhritaráshtra.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### TRUTH.

As man is born in an undeveloped state, his first age is an age of ignorance and submission to what he is told or advised to believe; but



when he arrives at manhood, he changes his childish thoughts and habits, only continuing his childish religious credulity, for few see the necessity of any change in this respect, not even when they find what they believe not only mysterious, but without meaning. But some begin to doubt, and commence to think for themselves; and owing to their mental culture, in common with their physical development, Reason predominates over blind belief, and gradually they take courage and begin to trample on Superstition. At this stage, when man becomes fully cognizant that his mental kingdom of peace is usurped and disturbed by Passion, his mind begins to rebel against the latter; but Passion having had a strong hold over the mental kingdom for a considerable time, and possessing Temptation as an ally, strenuously resists to the last, and, when Reason mediates, flatly refuses to hear, and challenges his right of interference. Whereupon Reason naturally advises Mind to wage war, and Mind, acting upon this advice, leads a kind of regular army drawn up in battle array, the chief officers of which are—first, the commander-in-chief, Intelligence, opposed to Passion on the other side; then the generals, Devotion opposed to Irreligion, Patience to Anger, Contentment to Avarice, Friendship to Falsehood; then the minor officers, Compassion, Tranquillity, Retirement, Intellect, Revelation, Science, opposed to Pride, Envy, Haughtiness, Injury, Enjoyment, and Hypocrisy; and finally, the aide-de-camp of the one side, Contemplation, opposed to the aide-de-camp of the other, Self-sufficiency. Everything is in a state of preparation, and a few arguments are made use of on both sides. The man, before taking any open and active action in his determined self-duty, comes out before the world with Reason as his guide, to see with whom he has to fight. He finds all deluded, and indulging in blind belief.

## TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna, O Bhárata! drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; and before Bhíshma and Drona and all the kings of the earth, he said:

“Behold, O king! these Kurus here assembled.” Standing there, the king beheld fathers and grandfathers, preceptors and maternal uncles,



brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances, in both of the armies. Gazing on all these relations drawn up (in battle array), the son of Kuntí, moved by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness, as follows :

### COMMENTARY.

#### TRUTH.

Standing here, man sees, in addition to his inner conflict of feelings, another outward opposition of popular opinion, represented by his nearest relatives—his Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Son, Wife, Grandfather, Preceptor, etc., etc., etc.—all dearest and nearest to him in this world. He is moved with tender feelings.

#### TEXT.

#### ARJUNA SPOKE.

“ Now that I have beheld this kindred standing here near together for the purpose of fighting, my limbs give way, and my face is dried up (of the blood in my veins), and tremour is produced throughout my body, and my hair stands on end. My bow, Gándíva, slips from my hand, and my skin, too, burns (with fever). Nor am I able to remain upright, and my mind is, as it were, whirling round. And I perceive adverse omens, O hairy one ! Nor do I foresee anything better, even when I shall have slain these relations in battle. I seek not victory, Krishna, nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we do with a kingdom, Govinda ? What with enjoyments, or with life itself (if we slew these relatives) ? Those very men—on whose account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments, or pleasures—are assembled for battle, having given up their lives and riches. Teachers, fathers, and even sons, and grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, with connections also—these I would not wish to slay, though I were slain myself, O killer of Madhu !—not even for the sake of the sovereignty of the triple world, how much less for that of this earth ! When we had killed the Dhártaráshtras, what pleasure should we have, O thou who art prayed to by mortals ? We should incur a crime were we to put to death these villains. Therefore we are not right to kill the Dhártaráshtras, our own



relations, for how could we be happy, after killing our own kindred, O slayer of Madhu ?

“ Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness, do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who do look upon the slaughter of one’s tribe as a crime, O thou who art supplicated by mortals ? In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions (laws) of the tribe are destroyed. These laws being destroyed, lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna ; and when the women are corrupted, O son of Vrishni ! confusion of caste takes place. Confusion of caste is (a gate) to hell, both for the destroyers of the tribe and for the tribe itself. For their fathers are deprived of the rites of funeral-cakes and libations of water, and thus fall (from heaven). By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those who cause confusion of caste, the eternal institutions of caste and tribe are subversed. We have learnt (from sacred writ) that a sojourn in hell necessarily awaits the men who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna ! Alas ! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we are prepared to slay our own kin. Better were it for me, if the Dhártaráshtas, being armed, would slay me, harmless and unresisting in the fight.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### MIND.\*

I am undergoing two conflicts (and these conflicts must necessarily be undergone by every inquirer who passes from the quiet domain of Intelligence into the noisy domain of Action): first, the internal conflict with myself; and afterwards, the external conflict with my friends and relatives. I become confused, and am at a loss to know what to do; I resign my adherence to self-duty, and by the illusion that

\* The word “mind” must not be misunderstood. It is here used in the sense of the word **मानस**, its Indian equivalent, and expresses a faculty distinct from Reason on the one hand, and from Passion on the other. The mind is the subject acted upon by these two forces—the former leading to emancipation, the latter to slavery.



comes over me I seem to be walking in a dream. All the dogmatic belief peculiar to the faith I once entertained comes before me, and shuts me out from free action.

#### TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna, whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrow, and sat down on the bench of the chariot.

Thus in the Upanishads, called the holy Bhagavad-Gítá, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the holy Krishna and Arjuna, (stands) the First Chapter by name

“ THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA.”

#### COMMENTARY.

TRUTH.

A man thus confused and troubled with grief gives up his courage in sad disappointment.



## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

### TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

To him thus filled with compassion, with his troubled eyes full of tears, and sunk in grief, the slayer of Madhu spoke these words:

### COMMENTARY.

#### TRUTH.

An inquiring mind, when filled with tender feelings, loses courage for self-duty.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Wherefore, Arjuna, has this dejection in matters of difficulty come upon thee, so unworthy of the honourable, and leading neither to heaven nor to glory? Do not give way to weakness, O King! That does not become thee! But cast off this mean effeminacy of heart, and arise, O tormentor of thy foes!”

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

Wherefore do you suffer Passion to prevail against you—Passion, which is unworthy of Intelligence, and leads not to true happiness? Do not fall a prey to weakness, or allow yourself to be deluded, but rise and do your duty.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“How should I, slayer of Madhu! contend in battle with my



shafts against Bhíshma and Drona, both worthy to be honoured, O slayer of thy foes? For it were better to eat even the bread of beggary in this world, and not to slay these venerable men of great esteem. But were I to slay these venerable men here, though they long for plunder, I should eat of banquets smeared with blood. Nor can we tell which of these two things may be better for us—that we should conquer them or they conquer us. Those very men, the Dhártaráshtras, whom if we slay we shall not wish to live ourselves, are drawn up opposite to us. As I am of a disposition which is affected by compassion and the fear of doing wrong, and my mind being bewildered by my duty, I ask thee which it is better to do? Tell me that distinctly! I am thy disciple. Teach me, who now implore thee! For I do not see what can dispel this grief, which scorches my senses, even were I to obtain the complete unrivalled sovereignty of the earth, and the command even of the deities.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### MIND.

How should I prevail by my own endeavours singly against the general opinions of my friends, which this world holds entitled to respect? For I would rather be stricken by poverty than go against the opinions of those whom this world holds worthy to be honoured. Were I to disregard social sentiment and public prejudice, though both of these rob me of my own true interest, my life in this world would be a despised and miserable one. After all, the true end of existence is so uncertain that I am not sure whether it were not better to allow Passion to prevail over Intelligence. What good is it to live if we hurt the feelings of our elders, who are against us? \* I become confused between popular opinion on one side and your supremacy on the other, and ask for advice as to my conduct. I being conscious of my infirmities, and knowing well from experience your ability to instruct, look to you to clear up the difficulty between duty and feeling.

\* Compare the English proverb, “One may as well be dead as out of the fashion.”



## TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

Arjuna, the harasser of his foes, having thus addressed Krishna, having said to Govinda, "I will not fight," was silent. Then, between the two armies, Krishna, smiling, addressed these words to him thus downcast:

## COMMENTARY.

TRUTH.

The inquiring mind having thus expressed the credulous thought, Reason naturally smiles.

## TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

"Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom! The wise grieve not for dead or living. But never at any period did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist, nor shall any of us at any time henceforward cease to exist. As the soul in this body undergoes the changes of childhood, prime, and age, so it obtains a new body (hereafter); a sensible man is not troubled about that. But the contact of the elements, O son of Kuntí! which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which come and go, and are temporary, these do thou endure, O Bhárata! For that man whom, being the same in pain and pleasure, and ever constant, these elements do not afflict, O best of men! is fitted for immortality. There is no existence for what does not exist, nor is there any non-existence for what exists. But even of both of these, those who discern the truth perceive the true end. Know this, that that by which all this universe is created is indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this inexhaustible thing. These finite bodies have been said to belong to an eternal, indestructible, and infinite spirit. Therefore fight, O Bhárata! He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who thinks that it can be killed, both of these are wrong in judgment. It neither kills, nor is killed. It is not born, nor dies at any time. It has had no origin, nor will it ever have an origin. Unborn, changeless, eternal both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed. How can



that man, O son of Prithá! who knows that it is indestructible, constant, unborn, and inexhaustible, (really) cause the death of anybody, or kill anybody himself? As a man abandons worn-out clothes, and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies, and enter other new ones. Weapons cannot cleave it. Fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet it, nor can wind dry it. It is impenetrable, incombustible, incapable of moisture, and also of drying. It is constant, capable of going everywhere, firm, immovable, and eternal. It is said to be invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. And even if thou deem it born with the body and dying with the body, still, O great-armed one! thou art not right to grieve for it. For to everything born death is certain, to everything dead regeneration is certain. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for a thing which is inevitable. All things which exist are invisible in their primeval state, visible in their intermediate state, and again invisible in their final state. What cause is there for bewailing in this? One looks on the soul as a miracle, another speaks of it as a miracle, another hears of it as a miracle, but even when he has heard of it, not one comprehends it. The soul in every creature's body is always invulnerable. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for any creatures. And considering thine own duty (as a Kshatriya), thou art not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than lawful war. Happy are the warriors who undertake such a war as is spontaneously offered them—an open door to heaven. But if thou wilt not join in this lawful fight, thou abandonest thine own duty and glory, and contractest a crime. And mankind will moreover relate of thee imperishable infamy. And to a noble man infamy is worse than death. The great warriors will think that thou hast retired from the battle out of fear, and thou wilt undergo the contempt of those by whom thou wast greatly esteemed. And many abusive words will thine enemies utter, sneering at thy prowess. What can be more wretched than that? If slain, thou wilt go to heaven; or if victorious, thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore arise, O son of Kuntí! Make up thy mind for the fight. Looking on pleasure or pain, gain or loss, victory or defeat, as the same, gird thyself for the battle. And thus thou wilt not incur sin. This opinion has been set before thee in



accordance with Sánkhyā (rational) doctrine. Now hear it in accordance with Yoga (devotional) doctrine. Imbued with that opinion, thou wilt discard these bonds of action, O son of Prithá! In this (system of Yoga) there is no destruction of nor detriment to one's efforts; even a little of this religious practice delivers one from great risk. In this (system) there is only one single object of a steady constant nature, O son of Kuru! Those who do not persevere have objects with many ramifications and without end. Not disposed to meditation and perseverance is the intention of those who are devoted to enjoyments and dominion, and whose minds are seduced (from the right path) by that flowery sentence which is proclaimed by the unwise, who delight in texts from the Vedas, O son of Prithá, and say, 'There is nothing else than that,' being covetous-minded, and considering heaven as the very highest good; and which offers regeneration as the reward of actions, and enjoins many different ceremonies for the sake of obtaining pleasures and dominion. The subject of the Vedas is the three qualities. O Arjuna! be thou free from these three qualities, free from the ordinary influence of natural opposites, reposing on eternal truth, free from worldly anxieties, self-possessed. As many uses as there are in a tank filled with waters which flow together from every quarter, so many are there in all the Vedas to a sensible Bráhmaṇ. Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, never in its reward. Do not be incited to actions by (the hope of their) reward only, nor yet indulge a propensity to inertness. Persisting in devotion, and laying aside covetousness, perform thy actions, O despiser of wealth! being the same in success or failure. Equanimity is called devotion. (Yoga). For by far inferior is the performance of works to mental devotion, O despiser of wealth! Seek a refuge in thy mind. Wretched are they whose impulse to action is its reward. He who is mentally devoted dismisses (by means of Yoga) alike successful and unsuccessful results. Therefore give thyself up to devotion. Devotion is success in actions. For those who are mentally devoted and wise, renouncing the reward which is the result of their actions, and liberated from the necessity of regeneration, attain to that place which is free from all disease. When thy mind shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then wilt thou attain to indifference to the



doctrines, which are either (already) received or have yet to be received. When thy mind, once liberated from the Vedas, shall remain unwavering, and constant in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

The expressions you have uttered are from your popular beliefs, and though they are words of wisdom, yet nevertheless you are mistaken. Do you not know that there is but one tribe of humanity throughout the world; and though men differ from each other in colour, dress, and tongue, the organization of all men is one, and each has a characteristic feature externally unlike the other? Also, do you not know that the soul of each man is an emanation from the universal Father, "the Almighty"? He is but one, and there is no second to Him; and since from that One alone all souls have emanated, the entire emanation is naturally of one caste, and any division therein, by popular opinion, would be an innovation, giving rise to jealousy and hatred, which you know must be avoided. The Almighty is eternal, and anything that emanates from Him must also be eternal. All souls are from Him, and are eternal; and being such, they always exist. O Mind, child of Matter and Spirit! you are the first-born, the Adam of the Christian Scripture, and Desire your wife, the Eve, placed in the domain of the heart, the Garden of Eden, a seat of worldly delight and pleasure on one side, and Paradise, or supreme felicity, on the other. Man is liable to slavery and emancipation. You know from experience that you are the governor or ruler of the human system, and when you, beyond what is fitting, lean towards or attach yourself to worldly pleasure, you gather the forbidden fruit, Passion, and pass a life of anxiety, trouble, and misery; but by my noble gift, if you pay greater attention to it, and endeavour to liberate yourself from too close attachment to worldly pleasure, you gain what is called true happiness and tranquillity of mind. Experience has taught you that matter is mutable; the pleasure and pain to be derived from everything you are surrounded with in this world is also changeable and momentary. Accordingly, the popular opinion formed by you, or accepted by others, is vague and not founded on truth, and therefore it should be



disregarded. A sensible man should not be troubled about that. The tender feelings that now and then rise up within you, consequent on your weakness, you must put down by me, who am capable of overcoming them. It is by me alone man acquires impassibility towards all external influence, and equanimity in regard to the internal influence of Passion. The ever-existing God can only be approached by discerning the truth, and acting in the path of Virtue. Every man must himself accomplish his true end, with me as his guide, and persevere after it; for I am the gift to man from God, the only-begotten Son (to use the term of the Christian creed), which exists in every human being, and through whom it can, with this interpretation alone, be justly said that every man must be saved. Remember, what I dictate and Experience attests is self-duty, and performing this in opposition to popular opinion, is in no way committal of sin, or doing evil in the sight of God. Popular opinion, superstition, and other vague notions, are the offsprings of ignorance; and as ignorance is born with the body, so also it will die with it, and must exist always. The existence and change of popular opinion is inevitable, and you should not be sorry for it. O Mind! you must remember this life is a state of probation, a battle field, **क्षेत्र**, between the opposing forces of Passion and Intelligence, and you should not act the coward; there is nothing better for a warrior than a lawful war. It is the best exercise for the spirit to be continually combating matter for truth, and waging battle against deceit; for the only path to happiness is the power over Passion. Some men, taking Scripture as their only guide, put their entire trust in it. These men are egregiously deceived. As many uses as there are in a tank filled with water, so many are there in the Scriptures to a priest; that is, as water may be used for numerous purposes, so texts may be turned by priests to their own private profit in a variety of ways; for the priests in every nation of the world have established a monopoly in religious instruction, and have made themselves thereby venerated, turning texts of their Scriptures to their own self-interest, in fulfilment of their professional creed, for they are well acquainted with those texts, and know how to wield them.



## TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“What is the description of one confirmed in spiritual knowledge, and constant in contemplation, O Krishna? How does a man of steady meditation converse? How does he act when at rest, how when in action?”

## COMMENTARY.

MIND.

What is the description of one who remains constant in contemplation?

## TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“When he has put away all desires which enter the heart, and is satisfied by himself in himself, he is then said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge. When his heart is not troubled in adversities, and all enjoyment in pleasures is fled; when he is free from passion, fear, and anger, and constant in meditation, he is called a ‘Muni.’ That man possesses spiritual knowledge who is free from desire towards any object, and neither delights in nor is averse to whatever he meets with, be it good or bad. And when he draws in his senses from the objects of sense, even as a tortoise draws together its limbs on each side, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge. The objects of sense turn away from a man who refrains from food. Even appetite turns away when it perceives his extreme freedom from appetite. For often the agitated senses of a prudent man, even though he strive (to subdue them), carry off his heart by violence. Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion when at rest, and intent on me alone. For he, whose senses are under his control, possesses spiritual knowledge. Attachment to objects of sense arises in a man who meditates upon them; from attachment arises desire; from desire passion springs up; from passion comes bewilderment; from bewilderment, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, destruction of the intellect; from destruction of the intellect, he perishes. But he who approaches the objects of sense with senses free from love and hate, and beneath his own control, having his soul well-disposed, attains to tranquillity



of thought. In this tranquillity there springs up in him a separation from all troubles. For the mind of him whose thoughts are tranquil soon becomes fixed (on one object). He who does not practise devotion has neither intelligence nor reflection. And he who does not practise reflection has no calm. How can a man without calm obtain happiness? When a man's heart is disposed in accordance with his roaming senses, it snatches away his spiritual knowledge as the wind does a ship on the waves. Therefore, O great-armed one! he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are entirely withheld from objects of sense. The self-governed man is awake in that which is night to all (other) beings; that in which other beings are awake, is night to the self-governed. He into whom all desires enter in the same manner as rivers enter the ocean, which is (always) full, yet does not move its bed, can obtain tranquillity, but not he who loves desires. That man who, casting off all desires, acts without interest, free from egotism and selfishness, attains to tranquillity. This is the condition of the Supreme Being, O son of Prithá! Having obtained this, one is not troubled; and remaining in it, even at the time of death, he passes on to extinction in the Supreme Spirit."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Second Chapter, by name  
 "APPLICATION TO THE SÁNKHYA DOCTRINE."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

When a man has obtained a victory over passion, and is divested of all emotional obstructions, he is then said to be mentally perfect. He is then what would be called a devotee, or a pious man; where piety is, of course, to be understood of mental culture. He must draw in his senses from sensuous provocations, just as the tortoise drags its limbs under its shell in the times of danger. Sensuous objects will lose their charm when man has divested himself of sensual desires. A man in this state is mentally perfect. Attachment to objects of sense arises from the consideration of them. A man who does not regulate his mind in the province of correct thought can never enjoy true repose, nor consequently true happiness. He may be said, in his conflict with Pas-



sion, to be like a vessel driven by the winds in a storm. But the man who has entirely divested himself from sensuous considerations, enjoys day when other people are groping in darkness. Spiritual knowledge is dark and mysterious to the world, while worldly interests are dark and mysterious to the wise man. Desires must enter a man only as rivers enter the ocean, feeding it, but not causing it to overflow.



## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“If thought be deemed by thee, O thou who art invoked by mortals! superior to action, why then dost thou direct me to this dreadful deed? Thou bewilderest my mind by thy ambiguous words. Tell me, therefore, one only thing for certain, by which I may obtain happiness.”

### COMMENTARY.

#### MIND.

If contemplation of religion or intellectual tranquillity is better than interference with the popular creed, and better than strife against Passion, why do you urge me to enter into the contest, and disregard the opinions of my friends and relatives?

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“I have already declared to thee, sinless one! that there were two modes of life in this world—that of the followers of the Sāṅkhya (rational) school in devotion through spiritual knowledge, and that of the followers of the Yoga (devotional) school in devotion through works. Without undertaking actions, a man cannot enjoy freedom from action, nor does he arrive at perfection from renunciation (of actions) only. For one can never for a single moment even exist without doing some action. For every one is forced, even against his will, to perform an action by the qualities which spring from nature. He who remains inert, restraining the organs of action, and pondering with his heart on objects of sense, is called a false pietist or bewildered soul. But he who, restraining his senses by his heart, and being free from interest (in acting), undertakes



active devotion through the organs of action, is praiseworthy. Do thou perform the actions which are necessary. Action is better than inactivity. And if inactive, thou wilt not even acquire the necessary sustenance for the body. This world entails the bonds of action on any action but that which has worship for its object. Do thou, O son of Kuntí! being free from selfish interest, practise action which has that as its object. The creator, when of old he had created mortals, together with the rite of sacrifice, said to them, 'By means of this (sacrifice) ye shall be propagated. It shall be to you a cow of plenty. By means of it do ye support the gods, and let these gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye will obtain the highest felicity. For, being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will give you the desired food. He who eats the food given by them without first offering some to them, is a thief indeed.' Good men who eat what remains after the sacrifice, are liberated from all their sins; but those bad men who cook for their own sakes only, eat sin. Beings are nourished by food. Food has its origin from rain. Rain is the fruit of sacrifice. Sacrifice is performed by action. Know that action proceeds from the Supreme Spirit. The Supreme Being is co-existent with the indivisible. Therefore this spirit, which is omnipresent, is always present in the sacrifice. He who in this life does not cause this cycle, thus already revolved, to continue revolving, lives to no purpose, a life of sin, O son of Prithá! indulging his senses. But the man who only takes delight in himself, and is satisfied with himself, and is content in himself alone, has no selfish interest in action. He has no interest in what is done or what is not done in this world. Nor is there among all things which exist any object of use to him. Therefore do thou perform the work which should be done without interest. For a man who performs his duty without interest obtains the highest (region). For by actions Janaka and others arrived at perfection. Even if thou only considerest the good of mankind, thou shouldst perform actions. Whatever the most excellent practise, other men practise likewise. The world follows whatever example they set. I, (for instance,) O son of Prithá! have nothing which I am obliged to do throughout the three worlds, nor does there remain unobtained by me anything which I might obtain, and yet I am constantly in action. For if I were not always to continue indefatigable



in activity—(mankind follow in my steps in everything, son of Prithá)—these people would perish if I were not to do actions. And I should be the author of confusion of the castes, and should destroy these mortals. As the unwise act, being self-interested in acting, so should the wise act, not being interested, from the wish to do good to mankind. And they should not allow a difference of opinions to spring up in the ignorant, who act with motives of self-interest. The wise man, acting with devotion, should fulfil all actions (which are prescribed to him). Actions are always effected solely and entirely by the qualities of nature. The man whose mind is befooled by ignorance thinks ‘I am the doer of them.’ But he, O strong-armed one! who knows the truth of the difference between the qualities and actions, believing that they revolve in the qualities, has no selfish interest (in acting). Those who are bewildered by the natural qualities, are interested in the actions of the qualities. He who understands the whole universe, should not cause these people, slow and ignorant of the universe, to relax from their duty. Do thou fight, reposing all thy actions on me, by means of meditation on the Adhyátmá, free from hopes and from selfishness, and having put away this morbidness. Those men who ever follow this my doctrine, full of faith, and not reviling it, are finally emancipated even by actions. But those who, reviling this (doctrine), do not observe my decrees, are bewildered by all their knowledge, and perish, being without reason. Even the wise man inclines towards that which agrees with his own nature. All follow their own nature. What can coercion effect? Love or hate exists towards the object of each sense. One should not fall into the power of these two passions, for they are one’s adversaries. It is better to do one’s own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another’s duty well. Death is better in the performance of one’s own duty. Another’s duty is productive of danger.”

## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

In philosophic and, therefore, the only salutary life, there are two sets of warriors. Knowledge is the watchword of the one, Action is the watchword of the other. By action must be understood action without worldly interest, and by knowledge must be understood an endeavour at



a comprehension of the nature of the universe, and of the object of man's existence. But knowledge cannot be obtained without effort of action, and, therefore, action and knowledge are related. Man cannot exist without action, for nature requires it. The three qualities—viz.,

सत्त्व, the good and inactive,

रज, the bad and active,

तम, the bad and inactive—

exist in every human mind, and they are invariably mingled together in greater or less proportions at all times, according to the germination, adaptability, and development of the different parts of the human system, also according to the circumstances in which man may be placed at different periods of his life. Is not this attested by daily experience? He who endeavours to exert himself without such action and meditation on sensual objects is a sensual man; but he who restrains his senses and is interested in action, is praiseworthy. The Creator made sacrifice a condition of the prosperity of man. The popular opinion is that a portion of the sacrifice should be given to the God. This, at all events, teaches gratitude to the Giver of all good gifts. But there is a deeper meaning in the doctrine. The sacrifice is Passion, and though a man may reasonably indulge in this, still a portion is to be given to the God—not so much, or not, indeed, at all, for His sake, for He is without desires of anything, but for the sake of the man himself. Those who do not offer this portion of sacrifice, but yield entirely to Passion, become thieves of their own happiness—that is, by grasping at all they render themselves incapable of appreciating any, as the man who has indulged too much in the pleasures of drink and love, cares little for wine or woman. Man should not act from a selfish motive, but from a sense of duty.

Another argument for performing self-duty disinterestedly is that, when a man gains victory by his intelligence over Passion, a benefit accrues to others, if not to himself, since he will act better towards his neighbour, and set a better example. For the world follows whatever the wise and learned practise; therefore it is highly necessary and important that the wise should not encourage sectarianism, but exert themselves to suppress the divisions caused by hatred and jealousy among mankind. Of what good either to himself or to the world is the birth of



a man, if he does not act with Reason as his guide? If he forsakes Reason, what difference is there between him and a beast?\* Better were he born the latter; for, says the Sanscrit proverb, स्वधर्मो विगुणः श्रेयान्तरधर्मो भयावहः “Self-duty is praiseworthy, another’s duty is full of danger.”

## TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Instigated, then, by what, does this man incur sin even against his will, O descendant of Vrishni! impelled, as it were, by force?”

## COMMENTARY.

MIND.

Impelled by what unknown force, then, does this man sin, as it were, against his own will?

## TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“It is desire (which instigates him). It is passion, sprung from the quality of badness, voracious, all-sinful. Know that it is hostile (to man) in this world. As fire is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, as the foetus is involved in the womb, so is this universe surrounded by this (passion). Knowledge is surrounded by this, the constant enemy of the wise man—a fire, which assumes any form it will, O son of Kuntí! and is insatiable. Its empire is said to be the senses, the heart, and the intellect. By means of these, it surrounds knowledge and bewilders the soul. Therefore do thou, O best of Bharatas! in the first place, restraining thy senses, cast off this sinful impetus, which

\* There are four classes of men, says the Indian philosophy, of which the first three would come under the beasts alluded to in the text; the lowest division comprehends the wholly sensuous, whose motto is “Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.” The third class comprehends those whose sensuality is relieved by the exercise of the imagination, as in the passion of lust. The second class comprehends those who, perceiving their sensual goods to be transitory, and not affording real enjoyment, yet indulge in them. The highest class is of those, really to be called men, who, as little as possible regarding them, cultivate only pure reason.



devours spiritual knowledge and spiritual discernment. They say that the senses are great. The heart is greater than the senses. But intellect is greater than the heart, and that which is greater than intellect is this passion. Knowing that it is thus greater than the mind, strengthening thyself by thyself, do thou, O great-armed one ! slay this foe, which assumes any form it will, and is intractable."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Third Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION THROUGH ACTION."

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

That unknown force is Passion ; it is the wise man's enemy. As fire is surrounded by smoke, and a steel mirror by rust, and the foetus by the womb, so is knowledge surrounded by Passion. Its empire is the senses, the intellect, and the affections. The senses are great, the affections are greater than the senses ; knowledge is greater than the affections, and that which is greater than knowledge is Passion. It is your duty to overcome it



## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“I delivered this imperishable doctrine of Yoga to Vivaswat, Vivaswat declared it to Manu, Manu told it to Ikshwáku. Thus the Rájarshis learnt it, handed down from one to another. During a considerable period of time, this doctrine has been lost in the world, O harasser of thy foes! I have now explained to thee this same ancient doctrine, (as I considered) that thou wert both my worshipper and my friend. For this mystery is very important.”

### COMMENTARY.

REASON.

I was the first to explain the imperishable doctrine I have expounded in the last chapter. It is not of to-day, but of far more ancient date, handed down from one to another. It has been existing in many civilized nations of the world in different forms and names, more or less understood, and even for a considerable time it has been lost in the world. I now explain it to you, as you appear truly desirous to know this important mystery, and warmly adhere to me.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Thy birth was posterior, that of Vivaswat anterior. How shall I comprehend this (that thou sayest), ‘I was the first to declare it’?”

### COMMENTARY.

MIND.

How was it declared by you first, when your birth is of later period? Pray, explain this.



## TEXT.

## KRISHNA SPOKE.

“ I and thou, O Arjuna ! have passed through many transmigrations. I know all these. Thou dost not know them, O harasser of thy foes ! Even though I am unborn, of changeless essence, and the lord also of all which exist, yet in presiding over nature (*prakṛiti*), which is mine, I am born by my own mystic power (*máya*). For whenever there is a relaxation of duty, O son of Bharata ! and an increase of impiety, I then reproduce myself for the protection of the good, and the destruction of evil-doers. I am produced in every age for the purpose of establishing duty. He who thus truly comprehends my divine birth and action, does not undergo regeneration when he quits the body, but comes to me, Arjuna ! Many, being free from love, fear, and anger, devoted to me, and taking refuge in me, purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, enter my being. In whatever manner these men approach me, just in the same manner do I recompense them. Mankind turn towards my path in every manner, O son of Prithá ! Those who desire success for their actions sacrifice in this world to the deities ; and, forsooth, in this human world success soon arises, produced by their actions. The institution of the four castes was created by me, according to the distribution of the natural qualities and actions. Know that I even am the creator of (this institution), although in reality not its creator, and incorruptible. My actions do not follow me, nor have I any interest in the fruits of my actions. He who comprehends me to be thus is not bound by the bonds of actions. Those of old time, knowing it to be thus, performed actions in the hope of final emancipation. Do thou, therefore, do an action which was formerly done by the ancients. Even sages have been troubled as to what is action and what inaction. Such action I will explain to thee, by the knowledge of which thou wilt be liberated from evil. The (natures) of action, forbidden action, and inaction, must be well learnt. The path of action is obscure. He who discovers inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise among mortals. He is devoted, and performs all his duty. The wise say that the man whose undertakings are all free from plans of ambition, performs actions which are consumed in the fire of knowledge, and call him



learned. He who abandons all interest in the fruit of his actions, is always contented and independent. Even though occupied in action, he does not really do anything. He who, without hopes (of reward), restrains his own thoughts, abandons all that he possesses, and renders his actions merely corporeal, does not incur sin. Contented with what he receives fortuitously, superior to the influence of opposites, without envy, the same in success and failure, even though he acts, he is not bound by the bonds of action. The entire action of a man who is free from self-interest and devoted, whose thoughts are directed by spiritual knowledge, and who acts for the sake of sacrifice, is (as it were) dissolved away. The Supreme Spirit is the offering. The Supreme Spirit is the sacrificial butter. The Supreme Spirit is in the (sacrificial) fire. By the Supreme Spirit is the offering (really) made. Therefore only the Supreme Spirit is attained by one who meditates on the Supreme Spirit in (performing) his actions. Some devotees attend to the sacrifice of the deities only; others offer sacrifice by the action of worship only in the fire of the Supreme Being. Some sacrifice the sense of hearing, and the other (senses), in the fires of restraint; some offer objects of sense, such as sound, in the fires of the senses; and others sacrifice all actions of the senses and of vitality in the fire of devotion through self-restraint, which is kindled by spiritual knowledge. Others also sacrifice by their wealth, or by mortification, by devotion, by silent study, and spiritual knowledge. Some also sacrifice inspiration of breath in expiration, and expiration in inspiration, by blocking up the channels of inspiration and expiration, desirous of retaining their breath. Others, by abstaining from food, sacrifice life in their life. All of these indeed, being versed in sacrifice, have their sins destroyed by these sacrifices. Those who eat of the ambrosia left from a sacrifice pass into the eternal Supreme Spirit. This world is not for the neglecter of sacrifice. How should the other be so, O best of Kurus? Sacrifices of so many kinds (as the above) are performed in the presence of the Supreme Spirit. Know that all these spring from action. Knowing this, thou wilt be (finally) emancipated. The sacrifice of spiritual knowledge is better than a material sacrifice, O harasser of thy foes! Every action, without exception, is comprehended in spiritual knowledge, O son of Prithá! Acquire this (knowledge) by doing honour,



by inquiry, and by service. Those gifted with this knowledge, who perceive the truth of things, will teach thee this knowledge. Knowing which, thou wilt not, O son of Pándu ! thus again incur an error. By this knowledge thou wilt recognize all things whatsoever in thyself, and then in me. If thou wert even the most sinful of all sinners, thou wouldest cross over all sin in the bark of spiritual knowledge. As fire, when kindled, reduces fuel to ashes, Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all actions. For there is no purifier in the world like knowledge. A man who is perfected in devotion finds it spontaneously in himself in the progress of time. He who possesses faith acquires spiritual knowledge, if intent on it, and restraining his senses. Having acquired spiritual knowledge, he soon attains to supreme tranquillity. He who ignores the truth, and is devoid of faith, and of doubtful mind, perishes. The man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other, nor final beatitude. No actions bind the man who trusts his actions to devotion, who has dispersed doubt by knowledge, and is self-possessed, O despiser of wealth ! Therefore sever this doubt which exists in thy heart, and springs from ignorance, with thy sword of knowledge ; turn to devotion, and arise, son of Bharata !

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Fourth Chapter, by name

“DEVOTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

You and I have gone through many births. Turn your attention towards the world for a moment, and you will find that no human being, from creation to the present time, has been without me, nor will be ; for I am the essence of man, and it is by possessing me that a being is recognized as human or rational, and distinguished as such from other beings of the world. I know all this, and my birth is by a mystic power of my Father, the Supreme God, the Creator of the Universe ; and you can only know His mystic power and approach Him by your entire adherence to me and complete victory over Passion. Your liability to temptation, and the ignorance by which you are surrounded, render you unable to comprehend what I naturally know in my state of perfection.

The word “regeneration” means new birth. This should be under-



stood in two ways : First, better birth, or change of state from evil to good in the living life ; second, birth after death. The latter cannot be understood well unless the former is gained. If you do not conquer evil, in all its phases, in your living state, you cannot comprehend what takes place after death. Wherever there is relaxation of self-duty, there has always been, in different ages, production or rise of individuals endowed with highly-developed reason to undergo any kind of trial, in order to establish self-duty. Mankind endeavour to approach towards the Supreme God in varieties of ways, in different nations, and they are accordingly recompensed in different states—viz., good, better, and best. Does not experience attest this, from a king down to a peasant ? Castes are my creation, instituted according to the natural inherent qualities in mankind. This is a division of labour necessary for the harmony and peace in the body politic of humanity, as experience teaches every man in his own individual system. Action is necessary to gain knowledge ; a subject of great confusion and misunderstanding is what constitutes action and what inaction. The nature of action, forbidden action, and inaction, must therefore be well understood. He who comprehends the real nature of action knows that it is not himself who acts, but the natural qualities which accomplish their office ; and, again, when he is apparently inactive, the vital action still proceeds. He who acts from interested motives seeks, whenever he commits a crime, refuge from the consequences ; but a man acting with devotion may even commit a bad deed without fear of its results, since he does so without any intention, simply by necessity or as a duty. A soldier who slays at the command of his officer, cannot be said to commit murder. The different dogmatical actions a man indulges in, peculiar to his faith, to gain spiritual knowledge, are not only full of sufferings and mortifying to his body, but make him almost as lifeless as if dead, and he even, during life, offers life as a sacrifice. All sacrifices spring from action. The knowledge of this brings final emancipation. The true sacrifice is a humble and contrite heart. As fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all actions. Knowledge is the best purifier. Therefore sever this doubt which exists within you with the sword of knowledge ; rise, and turn to devotion.



## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Thou praisest, Krishna, the renunciation of works, and on the other hand devotion (through them). Declare to me with precision that one only which is the better of these two.”

### COMMENTARY.

#### MIND.

Reason, you have explained the renunciation of works, and also suggested, on the other hand, devotion, which is better.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Renunciation of, and devotion through works are both means of final emancipation. But of these two, devotion through works is more highly esteemed than renunciation of them. He who neither hates nor loves, is to be considered a constant renouncer of actions. For he who is free from the influence of opposites, O strong-armed one ! is liberated from the bonds of action without any trouble. Boys, but not wise men, speak of the Sánkhyā (rational) and Yoga (devotional) doctrines as different. For he who is devoted to one (of these) only, experiences at the same time the fruits of both. That place which is gained by the followers of the Sánkhyā, is also attained by those of the Yoga system. He who sees that the Sánkhyā and Yoga are one, sees indeed. But renunciation of actions is difficult to obtain without devotion. The anchorite who practises devotion approaches the Supreme Spirit in no long time. The practiser of devotion, whose spirit is purified, who has subdued himself and vanquished his senses, whose soul participates in the souls of all creatures, is not polluted even by action. The devotee



who knows the Divine truth should think, 'I am doing nothing,' whenever he looks, hears, touches, eats, walks, sleeps, or breathes, even when he speaks, lets go or takes, opens or shuts his eyes, believing that the senses move (by natural impulse) towards the objects of the senses. He who, in acting, offers his actions to the Supreme Spirit, and puts aside self-interest, is not polluted by sin, even as a lotus-leaf is not so by water. Devotees perform actions by their bodies, hearts, or intellects, merely through the medium of the senses, putting away self-interest, and for the sake of purification. The man who is devoted, and regardless of the reward of his actions, obtains steady tranquillity. He who is not devoted, and is intent on the reward, by the impulse of passion, is bound (with the bonds of action). The self-restrained, renouncing all actions with his heart, can, without difficulty, rest (tranquil) within a city with nine gates, neither acting himself nor causing (others) to act. The lord of the world creates neither the faculty of acting nor actions, nor yet the desire for the fruits of actions. But each man's own nature produces them. The Lord receives no one's vice or virtue. Knowledge is surrounded by ignorance. Therefore creatures err. But the knowledge of those in whose souls that ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, lights up that supreme one, like the sun. Those whose thoughts are on that spirit, whose souls are in it, who exist in it, and are intent on it, their sins being put away by knowledge, attain to that place whence there is no return. The wise regard a Bráhmaṇ gifted with knowledge and modesty, a cow, an elephant, and even a dog and a Shwapáka, as the same. Even in this life, those whose hearts persist in equability, surmount the tendencies of their natures. For the Supreme Being is free from sin and equal-minded. Therefore they partake of the nature of the Supreme Being. One should not be overjoyed when one obtains what one loses, nor grieve when one meets with what one desires not, but should be of unwandering thoughts, not deluded (by the world), seeking to know the Supreme Being, remaining within the Supreme Being. He whose soul is not attached to the contact of external objects, and who finds pleasure within himself, whose soul is united, by means of devotion, to the Supreme Being, enjoys imperishable happiness. For those enjoyments which arise from external contacts are also the wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end, O son of Kuntí! The wise



man does not take pleasure in them. He who can resist, even in this life, the impulse arising from desire and anger, before the liberation of the soul from the body, is a devotee and a happy man. That devotee who is internally illumined, partaking of the nature of the Supreme Being, attains to extinction in the Supreme Being. Those Rishis whose sins are destroyed, who have solved all doubt, who are self-governed, and delight in the good of all beings, obtain extinction in the Supreme Spirit. Extinction in the Supreme Spirit is near at hand for those who are free from desire and anger, and are temperate, of thoughts restrained, and who know their own souls. The anchorite who renders external contact (really) external, confines his gaze also to the space between his two brows, and equalizes the inspiration and expiration which passes through the nostrils; who restrains his senses, heart and mind intent on final emancipation; who is free from desire, fear and anger,—is indeed always emancipated. Knowing that I, the great lord of all worlds, am the enjoyer of his sacrifices and mortification, and am well-disposed to all creatures, he obtains tranquillity.”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Fifth Chapter, by name

“DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE RENUNCIATION OF ACTIONS.”

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

Renunciation and devotion are both necessary for final emancipation, but devotion is the better, for by devotion a man is enabled to conquer the natural opposites—the vices; and liberation from the bond of action is the natural result. In reality they are the same. By renunciation should not be understood the abandonment of all actions, but of all worldly interest in acting; and this is difficult to obtain without devotion. The actions performed by a man after his natural senses and organs are by Nature's impulse, in fulfilment of an allotted office for the well-being and purification of the body. In like manner the heart of the devotee is prepared against the effect of sin (which constantly attacks him from without) by the disinterestedness of his action. He is no more hurt by sin than a lotus-leaf by water. In fact, devotees perform actions by their bodies, for bodily purification; by



the heart, for the purification of the desires; and by the mind, for that of the thoughts. The city of nine gates is the body, whose apertures are nine. The Lord of the world creates neither the faculty of acting or actions, nor yet the desires for the fruits of actions. But each man's own nature produces them. God receives no one's vice or virtue. Knowledge is surrounded by ignorance; but knowledge in the minds of the wise lights up the Supreme like the sun; or the wise man is best fitted, or rather least unfitted, to explain the attributes of the Deity, as far as human knowledge can comprehend them. The wise man takes no pleasure in those enjoyments which arise from external contact, which are also the wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end. The जीवन्मुक्ती, *jivanmukti* (spiritual abstraction), regarded in its popular sense, is an absurdity, as representing absorption in God from actions, contradicting the evident end of life, but is highly proper if regarded in the philosophic sense of absorption in Reason from Passion. And here the absorption should be so complete that life after it should be like a potter's wheel, which continues to revolve for some time after the work of the potter is done.



## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“He who, careless as to the fruit of his actions, performs such actions as must be done, is both renouncer (*sannyási*) and devotee (*yogí*); not he who kindles no sacrificial fire, and performs no ceremonies. Know, O son of Pándu! that what they call renunciation is, in fact, devotion. For no one is a devotee who has not (previously) renounced all (earthly) plans of interest. The action of an anchorite who is eager to ascend to devotion, is called a means, and when he has ascended to devotion, even his cessation of action is called a means. For when he is attached neither to the objects of the senses nor to actions, and has renounced all (earthly) plans, he is then said to have ascended to devotion. Let him raise his soul by his own means; let him not lower his soul, for he is his soul’s friend and also his soul’s enemy. His self is a friend to the soul of that man who has subdued his self by his soul. But from the enmity of what is not spiritual, his self might be an enemy, as it were, to his own soul. The soul of the self-subdued and passionless man is intent on the Supreme Being in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and honour and ignominy. The devotee whose soul is sated with spiritual knowledge and spiritual discernment, who stands above all, whose senses are subdued—to whom a lump of earth, a stone, and gold are alike—is called ‘devoted.’ He who is of the same mind to friends, acquaintances, and enemies, to the indifferent and the neutral, to aliens and relatives, to the good and bad, is greatly esteemed. A devotee should always exercise himself, remaining in seclusion and solitude, restraining his thoughts and himself, without indulging hopes and without possessions, keeping a settled couch for himself in an undefiled spot, not too lofty nor too low, and with a sheet and skin (to cover him), and kusha grass (to lie on). Then fixing his heart on the one object, restraining his thoughts, senses,



and actions, seated on his couch, he should practise devotion for the purification of his soul. Holding his body, head, and neck, all even and immovable, firmly seated, regarding (only) the tip of his nose, and not looking around in different directions, the devotee should remain quiet, with passionless soul, free from anxiety, remaining under the vow of a Bramachárí, restraining his heart, meditating and intent on me. A devotee who always exercises himself thus, and restrains his heart, attains to that tranquillity, the supreme extinction, which is conjoined with me. He who eats too much has no devotion, nor yet he who does not eat at all, nor he who is given to over-sleeping, nor also to over-watching, Arjuna! Devotion, which destroys pain, is produced in one of moderate feeding and recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, of moderate sleeping and waking. When he directs his well-governed thoughts towards himself only, and is free from desire as regards all wishes, he is then called 'devoted.' 'As a candle placed in shelter from the wind does not flicker,'—this simile is recorded of the devotee of restrained thoughts, who practises devotion of the soul. Let him know that the separation from the connection of pain, in which thought ceases, prevented by worship in devotion, and in which, beholding his own soul through his mind's eye, he is content with himself; in which he experiences whatever infinite pleasure the mind can receive beyond the reach of the senses; and moreover, remaining in which, he does not verge from the truth, and after receiving which he thinks no other acquisition superior to it, and during which he is not moved even by severe pain,—is known as 'devotion.' This devotion should be practised with that determination by which thought becomes indifferent (to every worldly object). He who has abandoned all desires which spring from imagination, and has, by means of his heart, kept back the whole collection of the senses from every direction (in which they would go), should gradually become passive by his mind's acquiring firmness, and, by having caused his heart to remain within himself, should not place his thoughts on anything at all. And keeping it back from those various objects to which the restless, unsteady heart wanders forth, he should bring it beneath his own control. For the highest happiness accrues to that devotee of tranquil heart who, having set at rest the natural quality of badness, partakes of the nature of the Supreme Spirit, and is sinless. The devotee who is



free from sin, and thus devotes himself continually, enjoys, without trouble, supreme felicity—the contact of the Supreme Spirit. The soul which is devoted to devotion, perceives the Spirit existing in all things, and all things in the Spirit, regarding everything alike in everything. I do not vanish from him who sees me in everything and everything in me, nor does he vanish from me. That devotee who worships me as existing in all things, if intent on unity (of object), lives in me, in whatever way he may live. He who, by comparison with himself, regards everything as the same, be it pleasure or pain, Arjuna, is considered a most excellent devotee.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

That man who speaks the truth, when it is fitting to do so, without caring for any reward or fearing any punishment of his speech, is the really good man. A man's passions may assist his spiritual progress, inasmuch as without these he would never act, never fight on the battleground of life; but they may also hinder that progress by antagonism to its proper development. That man is the true philosopher whose estimate of value is not guided by that of the vulgar, and to whom a toad and a woman are equally worthy of admiration. The devotee, in the popular religion of the Hindus, sits on kusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), on a level ground, where there is no view, as from a hill, to distract his attention from religious meditation, and where he would not, as in a valley, be pestered by worldly objects; and there he gives up his family attendants and possessions, and other matters included in the Sanscrit term, परिग्रह, or surroundings. The conduct of the devotee is absurd, but it may be well contrasted with the conduct of the philosopher, and a distinction drawn between the lover of God and lover of wisdom, which are virtually the same. The latter has to give up all his परिग्रह, if he behave honestly; friends and relatives alike desert him when he states his religious creed—desert him because he loves Reason, the best part of himself, his truest friend; and not as they do—Passion, the wolf in sheep's clothing. These worship the deity who beguiles and betrays, who offers the apples of Sodom, so fair and rosy without, but within, empty or full of ashes. The love of the philosopher is not the inte-



rested love of the world : though it meet with falsehood and ingratitude, it remains still the same ; though it be deceived and reviled, it yet retains the same intensity, like the coloured silk, which may be torn into a thousand pieces, and yet the original hue is never weakened or destroyed. Such a man as this is little likely to succeed in the world ; he therefore lives by himself, though in the midst of society, in a region uncontaminated by popular error—not raised up by vain ambition, nor depressed by enervating despair, with his own consciousness of purity and good to defend him from vulgar slander and the continual dropping of reproach, and finally resting on the honest conviction of having done his duty—a conviction for ever fresh, and in the power of all who will to attain. As the devotee remains seated (purifying his soul, as he supposes, by the practice of devotion), so the philosopher remains constant in the acquisition of wisdom by attaining the supremacy over Passion. As the devotee regards, in Hindu parlance, only the tip of his nose, so the philosopher confines his attention to wisdom, unattracted by popular shows—those transitory appearances of mirth or sorrow, poverty or riches, which engage the attention of the vulgar herd. A devotee who acts according to popular opinion thinks that he attains supreme extinction ; the philosopher who acts after his own enlightened reason, attains, by the subordination of all unruly desires and passions, supreme rest. Such a man is as a candle placed in the shelter from the wind, which does not flicker ; such a man is content with himself. He experiences whatever portion of infinite pleasure the human mind is capable of receiving beyond the reach of the senses ; he is moved by no pain or sorrow—he verges on everlasting beatitude. The philosopher keeps back all his senses from the objects which, like magnets, continually attract them, and by causing his heart to remain within itself—that is, not allowing it to wander at the beck and call of every external object which may please the senses—he at last becomes passive and attains tranquillity. The heart is restless and unsteady, and is continually wandering at its own will, but it is the duty of the devotee to curb its actions ; so the philosopher must not trifle away his time in profitless pursuits, but consecrate it all to the sole acquisition of wisdom.



## TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

"I do not see any (possible) steady continuance, O slayer of Madhu ! in this devotion of equanimity which thou hast declared, on account of the variability (of the heart). For the heart is fickle, Krishna, full of agitation, head-strong, and obstinate. I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind."

## COMMENTARY.

MIND.

What you say is all very well ; it has a pleasing sound, but nothing further. The heart is fickle, full of agitation, head-strong, and obstinate. I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind.

## TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

"The heart, O strong-armed one ! is doubtless fickle and difficult to restrain. But it may be restrained, O son of Kuntí ! by practice and temperance. It is my opinion that devotion is very difficult for one who is not self-governed to obtain. But it can be obtained by the self-governed, who uses efforts, by (proper) means."

## COMMENTARY.

REASON.

It is difficult, but it may be done. He who can govern himself may succeed in attaining wisdom.

## TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

"What path does the ungoverned take, O Krishna ! if gifted with faith, but with a heart which wanders from devotion ; since he does not attain to the perfection of devotion ? Does he not perish like a broken cloud, ejected from both (heaven and emancipation), not remaining steady, O strong-armed one ! and deluded in the path of the Supreme Being ? Thou shouldest completely dispel this doubt for me, Krishna ; for there is none other to dispel this doubt than thou."



## COMMENTARY.

## MIND.

What becomes, then, of the unwise? Does he not perish like a broken cloud cast out from the heaven of wisdom, or from the midst of society? You alone, O reason! can explain this.

## TEXT.

## KRISHNA SPOKE.

"Such a man, O son of Prithá! does not perish in this world nor hereafter. For no one who acts uprightly goes to perdition. The man who fails in devotion (only) attains to the regions of the righteous, and having there dwelt for years of infinite number, is born again (on earth) in the body of the chaste and the fortunate; or again, he is even begotten in a family of wise devotees. For regeneration in the world, of such a kind as this, is more difficult to obtain. In that (body) he re-assumes the mental application of his former body, and from that time struggles more diligently towards perfection, O son of Kuru! For, even against his will, he is carried away by his former practice. Even if anxious to learn devotion, he only surmounts the verbal duty. But the devotee who continues striving with energy, purged from his sins, is perfected after several regenerations, and thence reaches the highest walk. The devotee is deemed superior to ascetics, and even to those gifted with spiritual knowledge, and to those who trust to works (alone). But of all devotees even, he who, seeking me by his inmost spirit, worships me, full of faith, is considered by me the most devoted."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Sixth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SELF-RESTRAINT."

## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

The unwise by successive experiences attains a limited amount of happiness; but he never goes beyond this: whereas the wise attains all that amount of enjoyment which this life is capable of affording.



## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Hear, O son of Prithá! how, with thy heart attached to me, practising devotion, and seeking me as a refuge, thou mayest know me entirely and without uncertainty. I will declare to thee fully both spiritual knowledge and spiritual discernment, and when that is known, there remains nothing more besides to be learnt upon earth. Among thousands of mortals a single one, perhaps, strives after perfection, and even of those who do strive after it and attain it, a single one only, perhaps, really understands me. Earth, water, fire, wind, ether, heart and intellect also, and egotism, into these eight components is my nature divided. This (nature) is an inferior one, but learn my superior nature other than this, of a vital kind, O hero! by means of which this universe is sustained. Understand that all things are produced from this latter nature. I am the cause of the production and dissolution of the whole universe. There exists no other thing superior to me, O despiser of wealth! On me is all the universe suspended, as numbers of pearls on a string. I am the savour in waters, O son of Kuntí! and the luminous principle in the moon and sun, the mystic syllable ‘Om!’ in all the Vedas, the sound in the ether, the masculine essence in men, the sweet smell in the earth; and I am the brightness in the flame, the vitality in all beings, and the power of mortification in ascetics. Know, O son of Prithá! that I am the eternal seed of all things which exist; I am the intellect of those beings who possess intellect, the strength of the strong. And I am the power of the strong in action, which is free from desire and passion. I am the lust in all beings, which is prevented by no law. And know that all dispositions, whether good, bad, or indifferent, proceed also from me. I do not exist in them, but they in me. All this universe being deluded by these three kinds of dispositions, composed of the three qualities, does



not recognize me, the Imperishable, who am superior to them. For this divine illusion of mine, effected by the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount. Those who have recourse to me only can surmount that illusion. Evil-doers, fools, and low men, deprived of spiritual knowledge by this illusion, and inclining towards the disposition of the Asuras, do not have recourse to me. Four kinds of upright men worship me, O Arjuna! (viz.) the afflicted, he who is desirous of knowledge, he who is desirous of some possession, and he who is possessed of spiritual knowledge, O Prince of the Bharatas! Of these, the best is the one who is possessed of spiritual knowledge, if he always practises devotion, and confines his worship to me alone. For I am dear to the spiritually-wise beyond possessions, and he is dear to me. All of these (four) are indeed excellent, but the spiritually-wise is verily myself to my thinking. For, with devoted soul, he has approached even me, the highest path. At the conclusion of many generations the spiritually-wise proceeds towards me. A great-minded man who (is convinced) that 'Vásudeva is everything,' is difficult to find. Those who are deprived of spiritual knowledge by a diversity of desires, adopt divers rites of worship, directed by their own natures, and have recourse to other deities (than me). If any one worshipping with faith, desire to reverence any personage, I make that faith of his constant. Gifted with such faith, he seeks the propitiation of this (personage), and from him receives the pleasant objects of his desires, which were directed by me alone. But the reward of these little-minded men is finite. They who sacrifice to the gods, go to the gods. They who worship me, come to me. The foolish, ignorant of my lofty, incorruptible supreme being, think that I, who am not manifested, am endowed with a manifest form. Surrounded by my magic illusion, I am not manifest to everybody. This deluded world does not comprehend me, who neither am born nor die. I know all beings, past, present, and future, O Arjuna! but no one knows me. All beings fall into error as to the nature of the creation, Bhárata! by reason of that delusion of natural opposites which springs from liking and disliking, O tormentor of thy foes! But those men who act uprightly, in whom sin is dead, freed from this delusion of the natural opposites, worship me, firm in devotion. They who turn to me and strive after liberation from regeneration and death, know that whole supreme spirit,



and the Adhyátmá, and entire action. They who know me to be the Adhibhúta, the Adhidaiva, and the Adhiyajna, and also (know me to be thus), in the hour of death know me indeed."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Seventh Chapter, by name  
 "DEVOTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT."

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

When a man is acquainted with general knowledge, and knowledge of himself, which enables him to know the supreme Soul or God, he has learnt all that is to be learnt on earth. Among thousands of men, few strive after knowledge; among the few who strive after knowledge, scarcely one attains it. God is the Maker and the Destroyer. On Him the universe is suspended as pearls on a string. Those only who have recourse to me can surmount the illusions of Passion. The ignorant and wicked, inclining towards evil, do not recognize me. Four kinds of men have recourse to me: the poor, he who wants wisdom, he who wants worldly pleasure and wealth, he who possesses wisdom. The last is the best, if he do not desert me. I am dear to him beyond wealth who is dear to me; he, indeed, approaches my essence. A man who is convinced that wisdom is all, is difficult to find. Those who are without wisdom, through the influence of Passion, have other objects of worship, and another creed, according to the peculiar dispositions of each. These men receive their reward accordingly. Those who sacrifice to Passion become the slaves of Passion; those, on the contrary, who seek after me, find me. The ignorant imagine that I have some visible and tangible being, but I am not seen of all men; and deceived by appearances, fools imagine that I am capable of birth and death, like body. Not one knows me fully, though I know all. Men view the creation through the delusive mist of their own vicious affections; but the wise discard this deceptive veil, and behold me more nearly as I am.



## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“What is that Supreme Spirit? What is Adhyátmá? what action? O best of men! And what is called Adhibhúta? and what is said to be Adhidaiva? and how can there be any Adhiyajna here in this body, O slayer of Madhu? And how art thou to be known by the temperate in the hour of death?”

### COMMENTARY.

MIND.

O Reason! what is the Supreme Soul? what is supreme over the material? what is supreme over the spiritual world? what is supreme over esoteric religion? and how shall you be known at the end?

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“The supreme universal spirit is the One simple and indivisible, and my own nature is called Adhyátmá. The emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of existing things bears the name of Action. Adhibhúta is (my) own indivisible nature, and Adhidaiva is the spiritual person. Adhiyajna is myself here upon earth, in the body, O best of embodied men! And he who, remembering me at the moment of death, quits the body and comes forth, enters my nature; there is no doubt about that. Or, again, whatever nature he thinks on when he abandons the body at the last, to that only does he go, O son of Kuntí! having been always conformed to that nature. Therefore think on me at all times and fight. If thy heart and mind are turned to me, thou wilt doubtless attain to me alone. By thoughts applied to diligent devotion, and turned to no other object (than me), meditating on the Supreme



Divine Person, one goes to him, O son of Prithá ! He who may meditate on the Sage without beginning ; the regulator more minute than an atom ; the sustainer of all of incomprehensible form ; bright as the sun beyond the darkness, at the hour of death ; with steady heart, embued with worship, and by the strength of devotion collecting his breath entirely between his eyebrows,—attains that Supreme Divine Person. I will summarily expound to thee that place which those who know the Vedas call the one Indivisible, which those who are temperate and free from passion enter, and with the desire of which, men follow the life of a Brahmachári. He who closes all the doors of the senses, restrains his desires within his heart, disposes his breath within his brow, practises perseverance in devotion, utters the monosyllable ‘ Om ! ’ (which is) the Supreme Spirit, meditating on me, and thus continues when he is quitting the body, attains the highest walk. I am easy of access to that ever devoted devotee who remembers me, O son of Prithá ! with his thoughts never wandering to any other object. The great-minded, who have recourse to me, reach the highest perfection, and do not incur regeneration, which is the domain of pain, and is not eternal. All worlds, up to that of Brahmá, are subject to return, Arjuna ! But he who comes to me has no regeneration, O son of Kuntí ! Those men who know the day of Brahmá, which ends after a thousand ages, and the night which comes on at the end of those thousand ages, know day and night indeed. At the approach of (that), all (objects of) developed matter come forth from the non-developed principle. At the approach of (that) night they are absorbed into that (principle) called the non-developed. This collective mass itself of existing things, (thus) existing again and again, is dissolved at the approach of that night. At the approach of (that) day, it emanates spontaneously, O son of Prithá ! But there is another invisible eternal existence, superior to this visible one, which does perish when all things perish, called invisible and indivisible. This they call the highest walk. Those who obtain this never return. This is my supreme abode. But this supreme person, O son of Prithá ! within whom all existing things exist, and by whom all this universe is caused to emanate, may be approached by devotion, which is intent on him alone. But I will tell thee, O Prince of the Bharatas ! at what time devotees dying obtain freedom from or subjection to (the



necessity of) return. Fire, day, the increasing moon, six months of the northern solstice; those who die in this period, and who know the Supreme Spirit, go to the Supreme Spirit. Again, smoke, night, the waning moon, six months of the southern solstice; a devotee dying in this period attains only a lunar splendour, and returns. For these two ways of white and black are eternally decreed to the world. By the one a man goes without return, by the other he returns again. No devotee, O son of Prithá! who knows these two paths, is ever confounded. Therefore, at all periods, be devoted to devotion, Arjuna! A devotee who knows all this, surmounts whatever reward is promised to the study of the Vedas, or the practice of sacrifice, self-torture, and almsgiving, and obtains the highest and best place."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Eighth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION TO THE INDIVISIBLE SUPREME SPIRIT."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

I am derived from the Supreme Soul, or God. Action is the cause of births and deaths. The supremacy over both the spiritual and material world depends on me. That which is supreme over esoteric religion is myself personified. He who lives and dies in me shares my nature. There is no doubt about that. A man retains at his death the opinions he held during life. He who meditates with all his strength, and without allowing his attention to become distracted, enjoys me. He who is firmly attached to me need have no fear of evil or of suffering. The ignorant die and suffer in this world, but those who follow me are born again in their works, and what they have written speaks to posterity; they never die.\*

\* The remaining lines of the text refer to the popular superstitions which are, unfortunately, common to all creeds, and beneath philosophical notice.



## CHAPTER THE NINTH.

### TEXT.

#### KRISHNA SPOKE.

“ But now I will declare unto thee, if thou objectest not, the most mystic spiritual knowledge coupled with spiritual discernment, having learnt which, thou wilt be liberated from evil. This is a kingly science and a kingly mystery, the most excellent of purifications, clearly comprehensible, in accordance with law, very easy to carry out, and immutable. Men who do not put faith in this religion, O harasser of thy foes ! do not attain to me, but return to the path of this world of mortality. All this universe has been created by me, embodied as the undeveloped principle. All things exist in me. I do not dwell within them, and yet things do *not* exist in me. Behold this my lordly mystery. My spirit, which causes things to exist, sustains existing things, but does not dwell in them. Understand that even as the mighty air, which wanders everywhere, always dwells within the ether, so all existing things exist within me. At the conclusion of a Kalpa, all existing things, O son of Kuntí ! re-enter nature, which is cognate with me. But I cause them to come forth again at the beginning of a Kalpa. Supported by my material essence, I cause this entire system of existing things to emanate again and again, without any power of their own, by the power of the material essence. Nor do these actions implicate me, O despiser of wealth ! me who remain tranquil, as one unconcerned by them, and not interested by these actions. Under my superintendence, nature produces movable and immovable things. By this means, O son of Kuntí ! does the world revolve. The deluded despise me when invested with a human form, not understanding my high existence, which is the lord of all things,—vain in their hopes, their actions, and their knowledge ; devoid of reflection, and inclining to the deluded nature of the Asuras and Rákshasas. But the high-minded, inclining to the



nature of the gods, worship me with their hearts turned to no other object, knowing me to be the imperishable principle of all things. Always glorifying me and striving with unbroken vows, and prostrating themselves before me, they worship me, constant in devotion. Others also, offering the sacrifice of knowledge, worship me, who am present everywhere in divers forms, by means of my singleness and separability. I am the immolation. I am the whole sacrificial rite. I am the libation offered to ancestors. I am the drug. I am the incantation. I am the sacrificial butter also. I am the fire. I am the incense. I am the father, the mother, the sustainer, the grandfather of this universe,—the mystic doctrine, the purification, the syllable ‘Om!’—the Rich-, the Sáman-, and also the Yajur-, Veda,—the path, the supporter, the master, the witness, the habitation, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the place, the receptacle, the inexhaustible seed. I heat (the world). I withhold and pour out the rain. I am ambrosia and death, the existing and the non-existing. Those who know the three Vedas, who drink the Soma, who purify themselves from sin and offer sacrifices, implore of me the attainment of heaven: these, obtaining as their reward the world of the holy Indra, eat in heaven the divine food of the gods. Having enjoyed this great world of heaven, they re-enter the world of mortals when the reward is exhausted. Following in this manner the law of the Vedas, they indulge in their desires, and obtain a happiness which comes and goes. I bear the responsibility of the happiness of those men who, constant in devotion, worship me, meditating on me, and having no other object. And even those also who devotedly worship other gods with the gift of faith, worship me, too, O son of Kuntí! but not properly. For I am the devourer and lord also of all sacrifices; but they do not understand me truly, therefore they fall. Those who devote themselves to the gods, go to the gods; those who do so to the Pitris, go to the Pitris. The worshippers of the Bhútas go to the Bhútas. Only my worshippers come to me. If any one offer me a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, with devotional intention, I eat it, thus piously offered by one of devoted mind. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest away, whatever mortification thou performest, O son of Kuntí! that do as an offering to me. Thus thou



shalt be freed from the bonds of action, which are the good and bad results (of actions), and if thou be devoted to devotion and renunciation, when discharged (from the body), thou wilt come to me. I am the same to all beings. I have neither foe nor friend. But those who worship me with devotion, dwell in me and I also in them. Even if one who has led a very bad life worship me, devoted to no other object, he must be considered as a good man ; for he has judged aright. He soon becomes religiously disposed, and enters eternal rest. Rest assured, O son of Kuntí ! that he who worships me never perishes. For even those who are born in sin—even women, Vaishyas and Shúdras—take the highest path, if they have recourse to me. How much more, then, sacred Bráhmans and pious Rájarshis. Worship me by disdaining this finite and wretched world. Place thy heart on me, worshipping me, sacrificing to me, saluting me. Thus shalt thou come to me, if thou thus devotest thyself, intent on me.”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Ninth Chapter, by name “DEVOTION BY MEANS OF KINGLY KNOWLEDGE AND KINGLY MYSTERY.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

God being creator of the universe, all things are naturally in Him existent. I am not concerned by the changes of this world. I stand aloof as a spectator at the games. I am wholly disinterested. The ignorant scorn me, because they are ignorant and are incapable of appreciating my proper nature ; equally foolish in their expectation, their deeds, and their ideas, naturally propense to evil. But the virtuous embrace me alone. In all actions of life, and on all occasions, a chief regard should be had to me. Religious observances may not be indulged erroneously. Worshipers must understand thoroughly the object of their worship and adore with fearless intelligence, and not with degraded and self-interested terror. I show no partiality ; all are to me alike. If the ignorant man turn to me, he has done well, and I shall show him favour. He does his duty ; he becomes wise, and obtains repose.\*

\* There is a good deal that is said in this chapter which is according to the popular superstitions and opinions generally entertained in all creeds.



## CHAPTER THE TENTH.

### TEXT.

#### KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Listen even further, O strong-armed one! to my important words, which I will proclaim to thee, whom I love, from a desire for thy good. Neither the multitude of the Suras know my origin, nor yet the Maharshis, for I am the origin of all gods and of all the Maharshis. He among mortals who knows that I, the great Lord of the world, have had neither birth nor beginning, is not confounded by error, and is liberated from all his sins. Intelligence, spiritual knowledge, absence of error, patience, truth, temperance, tranquillity, pleasure, pain, birth, death, danger, and also security, innocence, equanimity, satisfaction, mortification, almsgiving, glory and ignominy, are the dispositions of beings, severally derived from me alone. The seven Maharshis, and the four Ancients, and the Manus, partaking of my existence, were born by my mind, and from them these inhabitants of the world are sprung. He who truly comprehends this pre-eminence and mystic faculty of mine, is gifted with unshaken devotion; there is no doubt about that. I am the origin of all. From me all proceeds. Believing me to be thus, the wise, gifted with meditative powers, worship me. Thinking on me, dead in me, teaching one another, and constantly telling of me, they are both satisfied and delighted. To them who are constantly devoted, and worship me according to (the ordinances of) love, I give that mental devotion, by means of which they eventually come to me. For them only do I, on account of my compassion, remaining in my own condition, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual knowledge.”

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

For your own advantage I will continue my explanation. All saints



or wise men, in every part of the world, are connected with me. Absorbed in me, men experience delight. To them I am ever the same, though to the world generally I assume diverse appearances. In the wise I destroy the shadows of ignorance, as the morning sun melts the mists of night.

## TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Thou art the Supreme Universal Spirit, the Supreme dwelling, the most excellent purification. The Eternal Person, divine, prior to the gods, unborn, omnipresent, all the Rishis declare thee to be, and the Devarshi, Nárada, Asita, Devala, and the Vyása, and thou wilt also tell me thyself too. Everything that thou tellest me, O Hairy One! I believe to be true; for neither the gods nor Dánavas comprehend thy manifestation, O Holy One! Thou thyself only knowest thyself by thyself, O Supreme Person! Creator and Lord of all that exists! God of Gods! Lord of the Universe! For thou shouldst completely declare thine own divine virtues, by means of which thou hast pervaded and continuest to pervade these worlds. How shall I know thee, O mystic one! ever considering thee in all points of view? In what particular forms of existence should I contemplate thee, O Holy One? Relate further at full length thine own magic power and virtue, O thou who art besought by mortals! for I am never sated of devouring this ambrosia through mine ears.”

## COMMENTARY.

MIND.

You are all in all. You alone are worthy of credit. All other worldly voices may deceive. By what means do you govern this universe and inform the world? How shall I recognize you? Explain more fully your nature and disposition, for I shall never be weary of hearing you.

## TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Well then, I will relate to thee my own divine virtues, at least the principal ones, O best of Kurus! for there is no end to my extensiveness.



I am the soul, O Arjuna! which exists in the hearts of all beings, and I am the beginning and the middle, and also the end, of existing things. Among the Ádityas, I am Vishnu. Among luminous bodies, I am the beaming sun. I am Maríchi among the Maruts; among lunar mansions, I am the mansion of the moon. Of the Vedas I am the Sáma-veda. Among the inferior gods, I am Vásaava; and among senses, I am the heart. Among material principles, I am intellect; and among the Rudras, I am Shankara. Kuvera, among Yakshas and Rakshasas; and among Vasus, I am fire; Meru, among mountain-peaks. And know, O son of Prithá! that I am Vrihaspati, the chief of household priests. Among generals, I am Skanda; among pieces of water, the ocean; among Maharshis, I am Bhrigu; among words, the monosyllable 'Om'; among forms of worship, the silent worship; among mountain ranges, the Himálaya. The sacred fig-tree, among all trees; and among Devarshis, Nárada. Among Gandharvas, Chitraratha; among the perfect, Kapila, the Muni. Know that among horses I am Uchchaishshravasa, sprung from ambrosia; Airávata among elephants, and among men, the king. I am the thunderbolt among weapons; among cows, Kámaduk. And I am the procreator, Kandarpa. Among serpents, I am Vásuki. And I am Ananta among Nágas; Varuna, among inhabitants of the water. And among the Pitris I am Aryaman; Yama, among correctors. And I am Prahláda among the Daityas; Time among things which count. And among animals, I am the lion; and Vainateya among birds. I am the wind among purifiers; Ráma among soldiers. And among fishes I am the Makara. I am the Ganges among rivers. And of creations I am the beginning, the end, and the middle, Arjuna; the knowledge of the Adhyátmá, among sciences; and (human) speech, among sounds of utterance. And I am the letter A among letters, the combination itself of a compound word. I am also eternal time. I am the preserver who watches in all directions. And I am Death, who seizes all, and the Birth of those who are to be;—Fame, Fortune and Speech, Memory, Meditation, Perseverance and Patience among feminine words. I am the Vrihatsáman among the hymns (of the Sáma-Veda); the Gáyatrí among rhymes. Among months I am Márga-shírsha; among seasons, the flowery spring. I am the game of dice among things which deceive; splendour itself among



splendid things. I am victory; I am perseverance. I am the goodness of the good. Among the descendants of Vrishni, I am Vāsudeva; among the Pándavas, Arjuna. Among Munis also, I am the Vyása; among poets, the poet Ushanas. The rod among tamers am I; I am polity, among means of victory. And I am silence, too, among mysteries; the knowledge of the wise. And I am that which is the seed of all existing things, O Arjuna! There exists no one thing, movable or immovable, which is without me. There is no end of my divine virtues, O harasser of thy foes! but I have made this extended narration of my pre-eminence by way of instance. Whatever is pre-eminent, or the essence (of anything), fortunate or mighty also, do thou understand, in truth, to be sprung from part of my energy. But what, indeed, hast thou to do, Arjuna, with so much knowledge as all this? (One sentence comprehends it all—viz.,) I have established, and continue to establish, all this universe by one portion of myself.”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Tenth Chapter, by name

“DEVOTION TO THE DIVINE VIRTUES.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

I will do as you wish. There is no limit to my nature. I am the first and the last. I am everywhere the highest and best.\*

\* The rest of this chapter is purely theological, and as such needs no comment.



## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“My delusion has been dispersed by the words which thou hast spoken for my good, (concerning) that highest mystery called the Adhyátmá. For I have heard at full length from thee, O thou whose eyes are like lotus-leaves! the origin and dissolution of existing things, and also thy inexhaustible greatness. I desire, O highest Lord! to behold thy sovereign form, even as thou hast thus declared thyself to be, O best of men! If thou thinkest that that form is possible for me to look upon, master! do thou, Lord of Devotion! show thine inexhaustible self to me.”

### COMMENTARY.

MIND.

I now understand the mystery of the Supreme Soul. I most desire to see God in His immaterial form.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Behold my forms, O son of Prithá! in hundreds and thousands of divers kinds, heavenly, and of divers colours and fashions. Behold Ádityas, Vasus, Rudras, the twin Ashwinau, and the Maruts. Behold many wonders, which thou hast never seen before, son of Bharata! Here in my body now behold the whole universe in a collective form, with movable and immovable objects, and whatever else thou wouldest behold! But thou wilt not be able to behold me merely with this (human) eye of thine. I give thee a divine eye. Behold my sovereign mystery.”



## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

It is impossible to behold God in His state of universality and omnipresence.

## TEXT.

## SANJAYA SPOKE.

“Having thus spoken, O king ! Hari, the mighty lord of devotion, showed to the son of Prithá his sovereign form, gifted with many mouths and eyes, with many wonderful appearances, with many divine ornaments, and holding many celestial weapons, wearing celestial wreaths and robes, anointed with celestial perfumes, the all-miraculous infinite deity, with his face turned in all directions. If the light of a thousand suns were to break forth in the sky at the same time, it would be similar to the brilliance of that mighty one. There did the son of Pándu then behold the whole universe, so multifariously distributed, collected in one in the person of the god of gods. Thereupon the despiser of wealth, struck with amazement, and with his hair standing on end, saluted the god by bowing his head, folded his hands reverentially, and spoke as follows ” :—\*

## ARJUNA SPOKE.

“I behold all the gods in thy body, O god ! and crowds of different beings, the lord Brahmá on a throne of a lotus-cup, and all the Rishis and celestial serpents. I see thee with many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes, everywhere of infinite form. I see neither end, nor middle, nor yet beginning of thee, O Lord of All ! of the form of All ! crowned with a diadem, bearing a club, and a discus. I see thee, a mass of light, beaming everywhere, hard to look upon, bright as a kindled fire or the sun, on all sides immeasurable. I believe thee to be the indivisible, the highest object of knowledge, the supreme receptacle of this universe, the imperishable preserver of eternal law, the everlasting person. I see thee without beginning, middle, or end, of infinite strength, with the sun and moon as eyes, mouths like a kindled fire, heating all the universe with thy splendour. For this space between heaven and earth, and

\* This language is highly poetical ; it establishes the omnipresence of the Deity.



every quarter of heaven, are pervaded by thee alone. The triple world is astounded, O mighty one! having beheld this miraculous and terrific form of thine. For these crowds of Suras turn to thee (as their refuge). Some, affrighted, murmur with folded hands. The multitudes of Maharshis and Siddhas praise thee in most excellent hymns, crying, 'Hail to thee!' Rudras, Ádityas; Vasus, and all the Sádhyas, Vishwas, the twin Ashwinau, and Maruts and Ushmapás, the crowds of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas behold thee, and are all amazed. Having seen thy mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, O great-armed one! and with many arms, thighs, and feet, many stomachs and many projecting teeth, the worlds and I, too, are astounded. For since I have seen thee, touching the skies (in height), beaming with divers colours, with open mouth, and huge glittering eyes, my inmost soul is troubled, and I lose both my firmness and tranquillity, O Vishnu! I cease to recognize the regions of heaven, and experience no joy, merely from beholding thy mouths with their projecting teeth, like the fire of death. Be merciful, O Lord of gods! habitation of the universe! and all these sons of Dhritaráshtra, together with multitudes of the kings of the earth, Bhíshma, Drona, and yon son of a charioteer, together with our principal warriors also,—hasten to enter thy mouths, formidable with projecting teeth. Some are seen clinging in the interstices between thy teeth, with their heads ground down. As many torrents of rivers flow down direct even to the ocean, these heroes of the human race enter thy flaming mouths. As flies, carried away by a strong impetus, fly into a lighted candle to their own destruction, even multitudes (of beings), impelled by a strong impetus, enter thy mouth also for destruction. Devouring all inhabitants of the world from every quarter, thou lickest them in thy flaming lips. Filling the whole universe with thy splendour, thy sharp beams burn, O Vishnu! Tell me who thou art, of awful form. Salutation to thee, O best of gods! Be merciful! I desire to know thee, the primeval one, for I cannot divine what thou art about."\*

KRISHNA SPOKE.

"I am Death, that causes the destruction of mankind, (already) mature. I am come hither to destroy mankind. Not one, except thee,

\* This is quite theological.



of the warriors who are here drawn up in their respective armies, will survive. Therefore do thou arise and seize glory ! Conquer thy foes and enjoy the ample kingdom. I also have already slain these enemies. Be thou only the instrument, O left-handed one ! Slay Drona, and Bhíshma, and Jayadratha, Karna, and others too, strong in war, who are (really) slain by me. Be not troubled ! Fight, thou wilt conquer thy rivals in the fray."

## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

I am the destruction of ignorance. I am a warrior, and live to destroy the army of Passion. Rise, therefore, and do your duty ; you shall be the conqueror. Fear not.

## TEXT.

## SANJAYA SPOKE.

"Having heard these words of the hairy one, he of the tiara, with his hands folded in supplication, and trembling, again saluted Krishna and addressed him, bending with a low murmur, overwhelmed with fear."\*

## ARJUNA SPOKE.

"The universe, O Krishna ! is justly delighted with thy glory, and devoted to thee. The Rákshasas flee, affrighted, to the divers quarters of heaven, and all the multitudes of the Siddhas salute thee. And, indeed, why should they not adore thee, O great one ! thee, the first creator, more important even than Brahmá himself ? O infinite king of gods ! habitation of the universe ! thou art the one indivisible, the existing and not existing, that which is supreme. Thou art the first of the gods, the most ancient person. Thou art the supreme receptacle of this universe. Thou knowest all, and mayest be known, and art the supreme mansion. By thee is this universe caused to emanate, O thou of endless forms ! Air, Yama, fire, Varuna, the moon, the progenitor, and the great-grandfather (of the world) art thou. Hail ! hail to thee ! hail to thee a thousand times ! and again, yet again, hail ! hail to thee ! Hail to thee from before ! Hail to thee from behind ! Hail to thee from all sides too ! Thou All ! Of infinite power and immense might,

\* This is an expression of mind in a state of ecstasy.



thou comprehendest all; therefore thou art All. As I took thee merely for a friend, I beseech thee without measure to pardon whatever I may, in ignorance of this thy greatness, have said from negligence or affection, such as 'O Krishna! O son of Yadu! O friend!' and everything in which I may have treated thee in a joking manner, in recreation, repose, sitting, or meals, whether in private or in the presence of these, Eternal One! Thou art the father of the animate and inanimate world. Thou art to be honoured as more important than that Guru himself. There is none equal to thee, and how could there be another superior (to thee) even in the triple world, O thou of unrivalled power? Therefore I implore thee, saluting thee and prostrating my body; thee, the Lord, worthy of praises. Thou shouldest bear with me, O god! as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, as a lover with his beloved one. Now that I see what I have never seen before, I am delighted, and my heart is shaken with awe. Show me that other form only, O god! Be gracious, O king of gods! habitation of the universe! With thy tiara, thy staff and thy discus in thy hand, thus only do I desire to see thee. Invest thyself with that four-armed form, thou of a thousand arms, of every form!"

## COMMENTARY.

## MIND.

The ignorant vanish before you. You are the true object of the worship of all men. I now worship you. I am grateful to you for your explanation of this difficulty. Be with me as a lover with his beloved.

## TEXT.

## KRISHNA SPOKE.

"I have shown thee that supreme form, Arjuna, in kindness to thee, by my own mystic virtue,—that which is my splendored, universal, infinite, primeval form, never yet beheld by other than thee. Not by studying the Vedas, nor by almsgiving, nor rites, nor severe mortification, can I be seen in this form, in the world of man, by other than thee, O best of the Kurus! Be not alarmed, or in a troubled condition, at having seen this so terrible form of mine. But look, free from fear, with happy heart, upon that other form only of mine—namely, this."



## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

I have explained to you the truth, which no Scriptures, nor any prayer, nor almsgiving, nor mortification\* can explain. The mortified man may never comprehend me, nor know God. Therefore adhere to me without terror.

## TEXT.

## SANJAYA SPOKE.

“Vásudeva, having thus addressed Arjuna, showed him again his proper form, and the Great One consoled him who was alarmed by again assuming a pleasant shape.”†

## ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Now that I behold this thy pleasant human shape, thou who art prayed to by mortals! I am composed in my right mind, and brought back to my natural condition.”

## COMMENTARY.

## MIND.

I am satisfied.

## TEXT.

## KRISHNA SPOKE.

“That form of mine which thou hast seen is very difficult to behold. Even the gods are always anxious to behold that form. Neither by studying the Vedas, nor mortification, nor almsgiving, nor sacrifice, can I be seen in such a form as thou hast seen me. But only by worship, of which alone I am the object, can I be really known and seen, Arjuna, and approached in this form, O harasser of thy foes! He who performs

\* Fasting and sackcloth, vows and sacred bread,

Gifts of prayer, money, sacrifice, and praise,

Are but external signs of Passion, led

Captive by Reason in this world's wide ways.

† This is poetical.



his actions for me, intent on me, devoted to me, free from interest, and from enmity towards any being, comes to me, O son of Pándu !”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Eleventh Chapter, by name

“ THE VISION OF THE UNIVERSAL FORM.”

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

None can comprehend my true nature, but only by perfect action. Only by study can I be known as I am. He who reflects on me, free from Passion, finds me.



## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“Of those who reverence thee as worshippers, thus ever devoted, and those also who worship the indivisible and unmanifested, which are the most skilled in devotion?”

### COMMENTARY.

#### MIND.

Are those who worship you superior to those who worship any other imaginary power?

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Those who worship me, placing their hearts on me with constant devotion, and gifted with the highest faith, are considered by me as the most devoted. But those who worship the indivisible, indemonstrable, unmanifested, omnipresent, difficult to contemplate, all-pervading, immovable, and firm,—if they restrain all the senses, and are equally minded towards everything, and rejoice in the good of all beings, (also) attain to me only. Their labour is greater, since their thoughts are directed to an object which has no manifest form. For the path which is not manifest is with difficulty attained by mortals. But if men renounce in me all their actions, intent on me, and meditating on me with exclusive devotion, worship me,—if their thoughts are directed towards me, I become ere long, O son of Prithá, their extricator from the ocean of the world of mortality. Dispose thy heart towards me only, to me attach thy thoughts, without doubt thou wilt dwell within



me on high after this life. But if thou art not able to compose thy thoughts immovably on me, strive then to reach me by assiduous devotion, O despiser of wealth ! If thou art not capable even of assiduity, be intent on the performance of actions for me. Thou wilt attain beatitude even if thou only performest actions for my sake. If thou art unable to do even this, though filled with devotion to me, then abandon (the consideration of) the fruit of every action, being self-restrained. For knowledge is better than assiduity, contemplation is preferred to knowledge, the abandonment of self-interest in every action to contemplation; final emancipation (results) immediately from such abandonment. He who is free from aversion, well-disposed towards all beings, and also compassionate, unselfish and unconceited, the same in pain and pleasure, patient, contented, always devotional, self-governed, firmly resolute, who directs his heart and thoughts to me (only), and worships me, is dear to me ; and he from whom the world receives no emotions, and who receives no emotions from the world, who is free from the emotions of joy, envy, or fear, is dear to me. He who has no worldly expectations, who is pure, upright, unconcerned, free from anxiety, and from any interest in all his undertakings, and worships me, is dear to me. He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor loves, who has no interest in good or bad, and is full of devotion, is dear to me. The man who is the same to a foe or a friend, in honour or ignominy, the same in cold or heat, pleasure and pain, and free from interests, alike in blame or praise, taciturn, and content with whatever may be—who has no home, who is steady-minded and full of devotion,—is dear to me. But those who attend (at the banquets of) this sacred ambrosia, as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me, and worshippers of me, are dear to me above all.”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Twelfth Chapter, by name

“ DEVOTION THROUGH WORSHIP.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

Those who have regard to me only are superior ; but those who have regard to other powers have regard to me also, while they have regard



to them. That which is not plain, is not easily understood by men. Have regard to me especially in all actions. Knowledge is better than assiduity, and contemplation is preferred to knowledge. He who is affected by no passion is dear to me.



## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“This body, O son of Kuntí! is called *kshetra*. Those who know the truth of things call that which knows this (*kshetra*), *kshetrajna*. And know also that I am the *kshetrajna* in all *kshetras*, Bhárata! That which is the knowledge of the *kshetra* and the *kshetrajna* is considered by me to be spiritual knowledge. What that *kshetra* is, and what it is like, and to what changes it is liable, and from what it originates, all this, whatever (it may be), and what that (*kshetrajna*) is, and of what it is capable, learn in a compendious form from me,—which has been sung in various ways by the Rishis, separately, in different hymns, and also in metres of the well-demonstrated Brahmasútras, which treat of causes. The great elements, the egotism, the intellect, and also the principle of life, and the eleven organs and the five objects of sense—desire, aversion, happiness and unhappiness, multiplicity of condition, reflection, resolution, (all) this is briefly denominated *kshetra* with its passions. Modesty, sincerity, innocence, patience, honesty, reverence towards preceptors, purity, constancy, self-government,—indifference towards objects of sense; and also unselfishness, contemplation of birth, death, old age, sickness, pain, and error,—disinterestedness, and indifference towards one's children, wife, and household, and constant equanimity both in pleasant and unpleasant circumstances,—attentive worship by exclusive devotion to me, frequenting of solitary spots, a distaste for the society of men,—perseverance in acquiring knowledge of the Adhyátmá, consideration of the advantage of a knowledge of the truth,—this is called spiritual knowledge; that which is contrary to this, ignorance. I will declare to thee what the object of spiritual knowledge is. He who knows it eats ambrosia. It is called the Supreme Being, without beginning, neither the existent nor non-existent. It possesses hands



and feet in all directions; eyes, heads, and faces in all directions; having ears in all directions, he exists in the world, comprehending all things;—resplendent with the faculties of all the senses, yet disconnected from all the senses; disinterested, and yet sustaining all things; free from (the influence of the three) qualities, yet possessing every quality; existing both apart from and within existing things, both inanimate and also animate. It cannot be recognized on account of its subtilty, and it exists both far and near. Not distributed among beings, and yet existing as if (it were so) distributed. And it is to be known as that which sustains existing things, and both devours and produces them again. This light, also, of luminous bodies is said to be superior to darkness. It is spiritual knowledge itself, the object of that knowledge to be obtained by spiritual knowledge implanted in every heart. Thus have the *kshetra*, the spiritual knowledge, and the object of that knowledge been briefly declared. He who worships me and can discern this (spirit in all things), is conformed to my nature. Learn that nature and spirit, also, are both of them indeed without beginning. And know that the passions and the (three) qualities are sprung from nature. Nature is said to be that which causes the power of doing what must be done in the organs. Spirit is said to be that which causes the power of experiencing pleasure and pain (in matter). For spirit, when invested with matter, experiences the influence of the qualities which spring from nature. Its connection with those qualities is the cause of its regeneration in a good or evil womb. The Supreme Spirit within this body is called the spectator and admonisher, sustainer, enjoyer, great lord, and also highest soul. He who thus understands spirit and nature with its qualities, in whatever way he may have lived, is never born again (on earth). Some behold the soul by their mind's eye, by means of contemplation on themselves; others by Sánkhyā-Yoga, and others by Karma-Yoga. But others respect it, not knowing it in this manner, but having heard it explained by others. And even these, if studious of such tradition, even surmount mortality. Know, O Prince of the Bharatas! that as often as anything which exists, animate or inanimate, is produced, it is so on account of the conjunction of body and soul. He who perceives that the highest lord exists alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed; for, perceiving the same lord present in everything,



he does not himself destroy his own soul, but attains the highest path. But he who perceives that all actions are entirely performed by nature only, perceives that he himself is therefore not an agent. When he recognizes the individual existence of everything to be comprehended in one, and to be only an emanation from it, he then attains to the Supreme Being. This supreme eternal soul, even when existing within the body, O son of Kuntí ! neither acts nor is affected by action, on account of its eternity, and freedom from the qualities. As the ether, though it penetrates everywhere, is not polluted on account of its rarity, so the soul, though present in every (kind of) body, is not polluted (by action). As one sun illumines the whole of this world, so does (one) spirit illumine the whole of matter, Bhárata ! Those who thus perceive by the eye of knowledge the difference between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, and the emancipation of beings from nature, go to the Supreme."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Thirteenth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE KSHETRA AND KSHETRAJNA."

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

O Mind ! body is, as has been before said, the **क्षेत्र**, a battle-field ; and the intelligent principle which exists within every human being—that which knows itself and things around it—is called the **क्षेत्रज्ञ**, and that I am myself. The knowledge of these two acquired by Mind through actions is the spiritual knowledge by which emancipation is attained.\*

\* The system of Indian cosmology is here briefly referred to. The body is said to be composed of the undeveloped essence of matter. The human system is divided, in Indian philosophy, into a subtle and a grossbody, called, in the Arian language, **लिङ्गदेह** **आणिसूक्ष्मदेह**. Each of these is divided into five elements, and each element contains five qualities, so that in each body there are twenty-five qualities, but they seem to be assigned arbitrarily, so deserve no long notice.

The greater portion of this chapter is but repetition. The most important remark, both for its philosophy and its poetry, occurs towards the end.



## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“ I will explain further the great spiritual knowledge, the chief of sciences, by the knowledge of which all Munis attain the highest beatitude after this life. Having acquired this knowledge, they attain to fellowship with me, and are not regenerated even at the new creation, nor disturbed at the general destruction. The great Brahma is a womb for me ; in it I deposit the foetus. The production of all existing things is from it, O descendant of Bharata ! Brahma is the great womb for every form which is produced in any womb. I am the father which provides the seed. Goodness, badness, and indifference,—the qualities thus called, sprung from nature, influence the imperishable soul within the body, O strong-armed one ! Of these, goodness is lucid and free from disease, on account of its spotlessness, and implicates (the soul) by means of connection with the pleasant, and connection with knowledge, O sinless one ! Know that badness, being of the nature of desire, arises from appetite and propensity. This implicates (the soul), O son of Kuntí ! by connection with action. But know that indifference, arising from ignorance, is the delusion of all mortals. This implicates (the soul) by means of folly, idleness, and sloth, O son of Bharata ! Goodness connects (the soul) with pleasure, badness with action, Bhárata ; but indifference surrounding knowledge connects it indeed with folly. When one has surmounted badness and indifference, goodness exists, Bhárata ! badness when one has surmounted goodness and also indifference ; indifference when one has surmounted goodness and badness. When knowledge, the bright light, has been produced through all the entrances into this body, then one may know that goodness indeed is matured. Avidity, activity, undertaking of actions, restlessness and



covetousness, these are produced when badness is matured, O Prince of Bharata! Absence of light and of activity, folly, and also delusion,—these are produced when indifference is matured, O son of Kuru! But when a mortal reaches his dissolution, and goodness is matured within him, he then approaches the spotless worlds of those who obtain the highest place. He who reaches dissolution during (the predominance of) badness, is born again in those who are attached to actions; and one who dies in indifference is born again in the wombs of the senseless. They call the reward of a good action, of the quality of goodness and spotless; the reward of badness, pain; the reward of indifference, ignorance. From goodness is produced knowledge; from badness, only desire; from indifference spring folly, delusion, and also ignorance. Those who remain in goodness go upwards; those of the quality of badness remain in a middle state; those of indifference, remaining in a state of the lowest qualities, go downwards. When the spectator acknowledges no agent but the qualities, and comprehends that which is superior to the qualities, he approaches my being. Having overcome the three qualities which co-originate with the body, the soul, released from regeneration, mortality, age, and pain, eats of ambrosia.”\*

## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

I will explain the doctrine by which the wise man attains happiness. As the womb of matter serves for the creation of man, so the womb of the universe serves for the creation of nature. God is the giver of vitality or soul in both. The passions influence the intellect by its connection with matter. Carelessness with regard to this truth arises from ignorance of it, and sorrow is the result; but care and attention towards truth generate pleasure. As the sun ripens the fruits of the earth, so I, entering through the senses, ripen the fruits of the intellect.

## TEXT.

## ARJUNA SPOKE.

“By what marks is one who has overcome these three qualities (dis-

\* Much of this text is a recapitulation of what has already been commented on.



tinguished), O master? What is his course of life? and how does he overcome these three qualities?"

#### COMMENTARY.

##### MIND.

How, then, must a man overcome Passion?

#### TEXT.

##### KRISHNA SPOKE.

"He who does not hate (the three qualities), brightness, activity, and also delusion, O son of Pándu! when they come forth (from nature's bosom), nor long for them when they return to it,—who, sitting as if unconcerned, is not agitated by the qualities, and who does not waver, but (clings to the persuasion) 'that the qualities exist;' who is the same in pain and pleasure, self-contained, with the same (feelings) towards a lump of earth, a stone, or gold; equally-minded to those whom he likes and those whom he dislikes, constant, equally-minded in blame or praise of himself—in honour or disgrace—towards both parties, friends or foes; free from self-interest in all undertakings,—he is said to have overcome the qualities. And he who worships *me* with religious and exclusive devotion, when he has overcome the qualities, is fitted for the existence of the Supreme Spirit. For I indeed am the representative of the Supreme Spirit, and of the imperishable ambrosia, and of eternal law, and of intense happiness."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Fourteenth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE THREE QUALITIES."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

By remaining true to me, and not deserting me either in good or evil, in happiness or affliction, in good repute or bad repute, and by remaining constantly disposed both towards friends and enemies. A man who has attained this nature has overcome Passion, and verily has his reward.



## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“ They say that the eternal sacred fig-tree grows with its roots above and its branches downwards. He who knows this tree, the leaves of which are Vedic hymns, knows the Vedas. Its branches shoot forth downwards and upwards, nourished and increased by the qualities, and having objects of sense as tendrils. And their roots, which extend downwards, are the connecting bonds of action in the world of man. Its form is not thus understood in this world, neither its end, nor beginning, nor its constitution. When one has hewn down this sacred fig-tree, together with its wide-spreading roots, with the steady axe of indifference (to the world), then may that place be sought, to which those who go return no more. And I allude to that primeval spirit only, from which the eternal stream (of life) emanates. Those who are free from arrogance and delusion, who have subdued the vice of attachment to the world, always constant to the Adhyátmá, who have repulsed desires, and are free from the influence of those opposites known as pleasure and pain, proceed unbewildered to that imperishable place. Neither sun nor moon illumines that spot. The place, to which those who go return not, is my supreme dwelling. An eternal portion of me only, having assumed life in this world of life, attracts the heart and the five senses, which belong to nature. Whatever body the sovereign spirit enters or quits, it is connected with it by snatching those senses from nature, even as the breeze snatches perfumes from their very bed. This spirit approaches the objects of sense, by presiding over the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste, and the smell, and also over the heart. The foolish do not perceive it when it quits the body, nor when it remains (in it), nor when, actuated by the qualities, it enjoys (the world). But



those who have the eyes of knowledge do perceive it. And devotees, who strive to do so, perceive it dwelling within themselves ; but those who have not overcome themselves, being destitute of sense, do not perceive it, even though they strive to do so. Know that that brilliance which enters the sun and illumines the whole earth, and which is in the moon and in fire, is of me. And I enter the ground and support all living things by my vigour ; and I nourish all herbs, becoming that moisture, of which the peculiar property is taste. And becoming fire, I enter the body of the living, and being associated with their inspiration and expiration, cause food of the four kinds to digest. And I enter the heart of each one, and from me come memory, knowledge, and reason. And I alone am to be known by all the Vedas, and I am the composer of the Vedánta, and also the interpreter of the Vedas. These two spirits (*Purushas*) exist in the world, the divisible and also the indivisible. The divisible is every living being ; the indivisible is said to be that which pervades all. But there is another, the highest spirit (*Purusha*), designated by the name of the Supreme Soul, which, as the imperishable master, penetrates and sustains the triple world. Since I surpass the divisible, and am higher also than the indivisible, I am, therefore, celebrated in the world and in the Vedas as the highest Person (*Purusha*). He who, not deluded (by the world), knows me to be thus the highest Person (*Purusha*), knows all things, and worships me by every condition. Thus have I declared, O sinless one ! this most mystic science. A man, if he knows this science, will be wise and do his duty, O son of Bharata !”

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Fifteenth Chapter, by name

“ DEVOTION BY THE ATTAINMENT TO THE HIGHEST PERSON.”

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

Man is among animals as a tree among vegetables.\* As the branches are nourished by the sap, so man is influenced by Passion. The sap ascends and feeds the whole tree ; the nerves descend from

\* The eternal revolving current of animal life is expressed by the likeness of a tree.



the brain and influence the whole man. As the roots connect the tree with matter, so does the brain connect the man with spirit. As the form of the tree is not understood in its beginning or its end, so neither is man understood in his birth or his death. And as the tree is felled by the sturdy axe in order to render it serviceable, so must man cut down Passion by resolute indifference, in order to attain true happiness. The wise man reaches a state of mind unaffected by emotion or Passion; he dwells in a region unillumined by change of sun or moon. As the breeze carries perfume in its course from the flower over which it passes, in like manner is the mind affected by corporeal conditions. The ignorant know not that they possess a mind; it can only be perceived by the eyes of wisdom. It cannot be recognized when it is clouded by the smoke of Passion. It is mine to clear away this vapour by a light brighter than the material light of the sun, of the moon, or fire—by the light of intellect, which can illumine all things. All Scriptures do but represent me. I composed them, and I am the interpreter of them. I am the representative of the Supreme Soul, or God; I am therefore spoken of in the Scriptures as the highest person. But the world misapprehends this fact. They consider me a living being distinct from the Supreme Spirit. But he who recognizes this truth in every action may be said to worship me. I have explained to you this mystery—the theory of all religion. If a man understands religion in the manner in which I have explained it, he will be wise, and do his duty, and consequently attain happiness.



## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“Fearlessness, purification of his nature, continuance in devotion through spiritual knowledge, almsgiving, temperance and study, mortification, rectitude, harmlessness, truth, freedom from anger, indifference to the world, mental tranquillity, straightforwardness, benevolence towards all beings, modesty, gentleness, bashfulness, stability, energy, patience, resolution, purity, freedom from vindictiveness and from conceit,—these are (the virtues) of the man who is born to the lot of the Devas, Bhárata! Deceit, pride and conceit, anger and abusiveness also, and ignorance, are (the vices) of him who is born to the lot of the Asuras, O son of Prithá! The lot of the Devas is considered conducive to final liberation, that of the Asuras to confinement (to material existence). Grieve not, O son of Pándu! thou art born to a divine lot. In this world there are two sorts of natures in beings,—that of the Devas (divine), and also that of the Asuras (infernal). The divine has been declared at full length. Hear from me the infernal, O son of Prithá! Men of the infernal nature do not comprehend either the nature of action, or that of cessation from action. They possess neither purity, nor yet morality, nor truthfulness. They deny that the universe has any truth in it, or is really constituted, or possesses a Lord, or that it has arisen in certain succession, or anything else, save that it is there for the sake of enjoyment. Maintaining such a view, their souls being ruined and their minds contracted, baneful in their actions and hostile to the world, they prevail for destruction. Indulging insatiable covetousness, filled with deceit, pride, and madness, in their folly they adopt wrong conceptions, and proceed, impure in their mode of life,—indulging unlimited reflections that end in annihilation, considering the enjoyment of their desires



as the highest object, persuaded that such (is life). Caught in a hundred snares of false hopes, prone to desire and anger, they seek abundance of wealth by improper means, for the sake of pandering to their own lusts. 'I have now obtained this thing, and I will obtain that pleasure. I possess this wealth, and that, too, I will yet possess. I have slain this enemy, and I will slay others also. I am sovereign, I am enjoyer (of the world). I am perfect, strong, and blessed. I am opulent, and of noble birth. Who else is like me? I will sacrifice, I will give alms, I will slay.' Thus speak those who are befooled by ignorance. Confused by many worldly thoughts, surrounded by the meshes of bewilderment, devoted to the enjoyment of their desires, they descend to foul Naraka. Esteeming themselves very highly, self-willed, full of possessions, pride, and madness, they hypocritically worship with nominal sacrifices, not according to ritual. Indulging selfishness, violence, pride, desire and anger, detesting me (who live) in their own and others' bodies, revilers of me,—such as these, hating (me), cruel, the lowest of men among mankind, and wicked, I continually hurl into wombs of an infernal nature. Having entered an infernal womb, more and more deluded in every succeeding regeneration, they never come to me, O son of Kuntí! and hence they proceed to the lowest walk. That gate of hell, which causes the destruction of the soul, is threefold—desire, anger, covetousness. One should, therefore, abandon this triad. Liberated from these three gates of obscurity, O son of Kuntí! a man accomplishes the salvation of his soul, and thus attains the highest path. He who, neglecting the law of Holy Writ, lives after his own desires attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest walk. Let Holy Writ be, therefore, thy authority in the determination of what should be done, and what not. Knowing that works are proclaimed in the precepts of Holy Writ, thou shouldest perform actions."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Sixteenth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION IN REGARD TO THE LOT OF THE DEVAS AND THAT OF THE ASURAS."



## COMMENTARY.

## REASON.

The qualities of the wise man are entirely different from the qualities of the ignorant. The first raise the spirit from matter; the second make the bonds of its imprisonment in matter still stronger, and more grievous and more durable. O Mind ! you are born to the highest development. Good and evil natures exist in this world. I have explained the good ; now listen to the evil. In the popular belief, men cannot discriminate between action and the cessation of action. They consider enjoyment the chief end of life, apart from morality, purity, and truth. They thus accomplish their own destruction. They follow, in their confusion, after various beliefs equally delusive and unsatisfactory. They wander astray, either through obstinacy or indifference. Deluded by their own imaginations, and following what they conceive to be pleasure, their feet find no sure resting-place, but the ground slides from under them as they move. They are never satisfied ; the fruition of one desire is but the birth of more. Gathering the harvest of one field, they sow twenty others with that gathered grain. " I am, and there is none beside me," says the ignorant man ; for he considers not the uncertain and transitory nature of all things. Ignorant men offer sacrifice to wisdom, but with their mouths only ; their hearts are far distant from me. They hate me, and I, in turn, rejecting them, they become beasts. In everything be governed by me.



## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“But what is the state of those who, neglecting the ordinance of Holy Writ, worship, full of faith, Krishna? (Is it) goodness, badness, or indifference?”

### COMMENTARY.

#### MIND.

How fare, then, those who, neglecting Reason, rest in various religious beliefs? Are they good, bad, or neither?

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“The faith of mortals is of three kinds. It springs from each one's own disposition. Learn that it is of the nature of goodness, and also of badness and indifference. The faith of each man is in accordance with his nature, O Bhárata! Mortal man, who is gifted with faith, is of the same nature as that (being) on whom he reposes his faith. The good worship the gods, the bad the Yakshas and Rákshasas. Other men, being indifferent, worship the Pretas and Bhútas. Know that those men who practise severe self-mortification, not in accordance with Holy Writ, being full of hypocrisy and egotism, and gifted with desires, passions, and head-strong will,—torturing the collection of elementary parts which compose the body, without sense, and torturing me also, who exist in the inmost recesses of the body, are of an infernal tendency. But even the food, which is pleasant to each (kind of disposition), is of three kinds. Sacrifice, mortification, and almsgiving (are each of three kinds). Hear the following division of these. Those which increase life, vigour, strength, health, happiness, and gaiety, and which are



savoury, rich, and substantial, are the pleasant foods dear to the good. The bitter, acid, salt, too hot, pungent, sour, and burning, are the foods beloved by the bad, and cause pain, grief, and disease. Whatever food is stale, tasteless, and corrupted with rottenness, and even left (after a meal), or impure, is the food preferred by those of the indifferent quality. That sacrifice which is performed in accordance with divine law by those who do not look selfishly for its recompense, and who dispose their hearts to (the conviction) that it is right to sacrifice, is a good one. But know that that sacrifice which is offered by those who regard its recompense, and also for the sake of deceiving (by a false show of piety), O best of the Bharatas! is a bad one. That which is not according to law, and without distribution of the food, without sacred hymns, without paying the priest, and bereft of faith, they pronounce to be an indifferent sacrifice. Honouring the gods, the Bráhmans, the preceptors and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, the vow of a Brahmachári and harmlessness, are said to be mortification of the body. Speech which causes no excitement, which is truthful and friendly, and also diligence in muttering prayers, is called mortification of the mouth. Serenity of heart, gentleness, silence, self-restraint, purification of one's nature,—this is called mortification of the heart. This threefold mortification, practised with extreme faith by men who disregard the fruit of their actions, and are devoted, is pronounced good. That mortification which is practised for the sake of one's own good reception, honour, and respect, and in hypocrisy also, is here declared bad, fickle, and uncertain. That mortification which is performed by merely wounding one's self, from an erroneous view (of the nature of mortification) or for another's destruction, is called indifferent. A gift which is given in a (right) place and time, and to a (fitting) person, with the conviction that one ought to give alms, and to one who cannot return it, is related as a good gift; but that which is given for the sake of a gift in return, or again, in the expectation of its recompense, and reluctantly, is called a bad gift. That gift which is given in a wrong place and time, and to the unworthy, without the proper attentions, and disdainfully, is pronounced an indifferent gift. *Om, Tat, Sat*,—this is related as the threefold designation of the Supreme Being. By him were the Bráhmans, and Vedas, and sacrifices instituted of yore. Therefore the rites of sacrifice, alms, and



mortification enjoined by divine law, are always commenced by theologians by pronouncing the word *Om*. (With the conviction that the Deity is) *tat*, the various rites of sacrifice, mortification, and almsgiving are performed by those who desire final emancipation, without consideration of the reward (of their actions). That word *sat* is used in reference to reality and goodness; and the word *sat* is likewise used in (reference to the) performance of a laudable action, O son of Prithá! A quiescent state of sacrifice, mortification, and almsgiving is called *sat*; and also action on account of these (rites) is denominated *sat*. Whatever sacrifice, almsgiving, or mortification is performed, and whatever action is done without faith, is called *asat*, O son of Prithá! Nor is that (of any use) to us after death or in this life."

Thus in the Upanishads, etc., (stands) the Seventeenth Chapter by name

"DEVOTION AS REGARDS THE THREE KINDS OF FAITH."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### REASON.

Their religions spring from their peculiar dispositions, according to the proportions of the three qualities already explained. Men will become like the object of their worship. They make their idols, and they that make them are like unto them. The sacerdotal doctrine of fasting and mortification tends to injure the body, and so interferes with me.\*

\* The chapter concludes with a theological reference to the truth and universality of the Deity.

The allusions made in the text regarding mortifications and gifts are purely dogmatical, though, to some extent, they may be practically applied.



## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

### TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“ I wish to earn, O great-armed one ! the nature of renunciation (of actions), and of disinterestedness (in actions), Krishna, separately, O slayer of Keshin ! ”

### COMMENTARY.

#### MIND.

You have said much of renunciation and disinterestedness in action—be good enough to explain this.

### TEXT.

KRISHNA SPOKE.

“ The sages know that the rejection of (all) actions which have a desired object is Renunciation. The learned call the disregard of the fruit of every action, disinterestedness. Some wise men say, ‘ An action must be avoided like a crime ; ’ and others say, ‘ The action in sacrifice, almsgiving, and mortification should not be avoided. ’ Hear my decision in this matter as to disinterestedness, O best of the Bharatas ! For it is said, O first of men ! to be of three kinds. The action in sacrifice, almsgiving, and mortification should not be avoided. It should be practised only. Sacrifice, alms, and also mortification, are the purifications of the wise. But such actions, indeed, must be practised after having rejected selfish interests and their consequences. Such, O son of Prithá ! is my certain and supreme decision. Again, the renunciation of a necessary action is not right. The rejection of such an action is said to be from folly, and of the quality of indifference. If one abandon any action, merely alleging that it is difficult, from fear of personal annoyance, he



practises renunciation under the influence of badness, and would not receive the reward of renunciation. If one perform a necessary action, convinced that it must be done, Arjuna, putting aside self-interest and the fruit also (of his action), that disinterestedness is deemed good. The disinterested man, filled with goodness and with contemplation, and free from doubts, is not averse to unprosperous, nor attached to prosperous action. For it is impossible for actions to be entirely abandoned by a mortal; but he who is not interested in the result of actions is called disinterested. The result of actions of three kinds—unwished for, wished for, and mixed—accrues after death to those who do not renounce actions, but not any result to those who do renounce. Learn from me, O hero! the following five principles of action declared in the Sánkhyā (doctrine), and necessary for the completion of every action—the prescribed method, the agent, and the instrument of the particular description required, the different movements of the particular kind for each, and Divine will also as the fifth. These five requisites (attend) every action which a man undertakes, whether proper or improper, with his body, his voice, and his heart. This being thus, he who regards himself only as the actor, by reason of his mental imperfections, is wrong-minded, and does not really see aright. He whose disposition is not egotistical, and whose mind is not polluted, does not kill, even though he slay yonder people, nor is implicated (in the bonds of action). Knowledge, the thing to be known, and the person who knows constitute the threefold incitement to action. The instrument, the act, and the agent are the threefold collection of action. Knowledge, and the act, and the agent, are also declared in three ways, according to the difference of the three qualities. Hear these also, properly, in the enumeration of the qualities. Know that that knowledge by which one perceives a single imperishable principle of existence in all things, not separate in separate objects, is good. But that knowledge which perceives in all things, on account of their individuality, various individual principles of existence, is bad. But that knowledge which attaches to one object (to be performed), as if it were everything, and does not recognize the true cause (of existence), which is not possessed of the real truth, and is mean, is called indifferent. That action which is necessary, free from self-interest, done without love or hatred by one who is regardless of its reward, is said to be a good action.



But that action which is performed with great exertion, by one who desires some pleasant object, or, again, is egotistical, is called a bad one. One undertakes an action from folly, without regarding the consequences, the loss, the harm (it may do), and his own power (to carry it out),—that is called indifferent. (One who acts) free from self-interest, without self-praise, with perseverance and resolution, and unchanged in success and failure alike, is called a good agent. (One who acts) with passion, who is desirous of the reward of his actions, covetous, cruel by nature, impure, liable to joy and grief, is proclaimed to be a bad agent. (One who acts) without ability, without discrimination, who is obstinate, negligent, slothful, desponding, and dilatory, is called an indifferent agent. Hear the distribution of intellect and also of perseverance into three parts, according to the qualities, explained in full and separately, O despiser of wealth ! The intellect which comprehends the nature of action and of cessation from action, and what should be done and what not, danger and security, and understands implication by actions and liberation from it, is a good intellect, O son of Prithá ! That intellect by which one takes a wrong view of right and wrong, of what should be done and what not, is a bad intellect, O son of Prithá ! The intellect which thinks wrong to be right, enveloped in obscurity, and believing all things to be just the contrary (of what they are), is an indifferent intellect, O son of Prithá ! The perseverance by means of which one resists the actions of the heart, the breath, and the senses, with exclusive devotion, is good perseverance, O son of Prithá ! But the perseverance with which one cherishes, from self-interest only, duty, pleasure, and wealth, being desirous of their fruits, is bad perseverance, O son of Prithá ! The perseverance by which one fails, with foolish mind, to shake off sleep, fear, anxiety, despondency, and also rashness, is indifferent perseverance, O son of Prithá ! But now learn from me the three kinds of pleasure, O chief of the Bharatas ! That in which one experiences delight, from being habituated, and arrives at an end to pain—whatever is first like poison, but in the end similar to ambrosia, is called good pleasure, sprung from the serenity of one's mind. Whatever is at first like ambrosia, from the connection of the senses with the objects of sense, but in the end is like poison, is called bad pleasure. And that pleasure which, both at first and in its consequences, is a cause of the bewilderment of the soul,



arising from sleep, sloth, or carelessness, is called indifferent pleasure. There is no nature on earth, or again among the gods in heaven, which is free from these three qualities, which are born of nature. The offices of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shúdras, O harrasser of thy foes ! are distributed according to the qualities which predominate in the dispositions of each. Tranquillity, continence, mortification, purity, patience, and also rectitude, spiritual knowledge, and spiritual discernment, belief in the existence of another world, comprise the office of a Bráhman, sprung from his disposition. Valour, glory, strength, firmness, ability in warfare, and also keeping one's ground, liberality, and a lordly character, are the office of a Kshatriya, sprung from his disposition. Agriculture, herding of kine, and commerce are the office of a Vaishya, sprung from his disposition. Servitude is the peculiar office of a Shúdra, sprung from his disposition. Each man who is satisfied with his own office attains perfection. Now hear how he attains perfection, if satisfied with his own office. If a man worship him from whom all things have their origin, and by whom all this universe is created, by performing his own duty, he attains perfection. It is better to perform one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than (to perform) another's duty well. He who fulfils the office obligated by his own nature does not incur sin. One should not reject the duty to which one is born, even if it be associated with error, for all (human) undertakings are involved in error, as fire is by smoke. He whose thoughts are not attached (to the world), who is self-governed in everything, and free from desires, attains, by means of renunciation, the highest perfection of freedom from action. Learn from me, merely briefly, how one who has attained perfection attains to the Supreme Being, which is the highest condition of spiritual knowledge. Gifted with a pure mind, and restraining himself with perseverance, having rejected (the charms of) sound and the other objects of the senses, and cast off love and hate, frequenting solitary places, eating little, having subdued his body and his heart, intent on the practice of contemplation, always endowed with apathy—when he has cast away egotism, violence, pride, desire, anger, and avarice, and is free from selfishness and calm,—he is fitted for the condition of the Supreme Being. When he is in a condition for the Supreme Being, and his spirit is serene, he neither regrets nor hopes.



Alike to all beings, he attains to the highest state of devotion to me. By means of this devotion, he learns truly how great and what I am. And when he has learned to know me truly, he enters me without any intermediate condition. And though at any time he perform any kind of action, if he flees for refuge to me, he attains, by my grace, the eternal imperishable region. Having, by reflection, reposed all thy actions on me, intent on me, exercise mental devotion continually, and think on me (alone). Thinking on me, thou wilt, by my favour, overcome all difficulties. But if, from self-conceit, thou wilt not hearken, thou wilt perish. If, indulging self-confidence, thou thinkest, 'I will not fight,' that resolution of thine is vain. Thy nature will compel thee to do so. Tied down by thine own duty, which springs from thy disposition, O son of Kuntí! thou wilt, even against thine own will, do that which, in thy folly, thou wouldest not do. The lord of all things dwells in the region of the heart, Arjuna, and by means of his magic, causes all things to whirl round, mounted, as it were, on a circular engine. Seek this refuge, then, in every state of life, O son of Bharata! By its grace thou wilt attain supreme tranquillity, the everlasting region. I have thus expounded to thee] knowledge more secret than secrecy itself. Having deliberated fully on it, do as thou pleasest. But further hear from me my supreme words, most secret of all. Thou art very much beloved of me, and therefore I will tell thee what is good. Place thy affections on me, worship me, sacrifice to me, and reverence me. Thus thou wilt come to me. I declare the truth to thee. Abandoning all religious duties, seek me as thy refuge. I will deliver thee from all sin. Be not anxious. Thou must not reveal this (doctrine) to one who does not practise mortification, nor to one who does not worship at any time, nor to one who does not care to hear it, nor to one who reviles me. He who shall deliver this highest mystery to my worshippers, if he perform the greatest worship of me, will thus come to me, no doubt. And there will be none among men who will do me better service than he, nor will another than he be dearer to me on earth. And if any one study this sacred conversation held between us two, I shall consider that I am worshipped by him with a sacrifice of knowledge. And the man who should even only hear it taught, with faith and not reviling, may even, being freed from evil, attain the regions of the upright. Hast thou



heard all this, O son of Prithá! with thoughts fixed on this only? Is the delusion of ignorance dispersed for thee, O despiser of wealth?"

### COMMENTARY.

#### REASON.

These words refer to actions with beneficial or pleasing results. When a man altogether discards such, he practises renunciation; when he does them, but without any view to his own advantage, he is disinterested. Some say, we must abstain from actions altogether; others, that action should only be in sacrifice, almsgiving, and mortification. These have reference philosophically to the special cleansings of the mind, of the heart, and of the flesh. A man must not discard an action from fear or laziness. A man must not be affected by the result of his action. Man must act. Those who are disinterested have their reward; they attain the wise indifference of the wise; they become heirs of the kingdom of heaven.\*

The soul, the universe, and knowledge are the three courses of action. That knowledge which teaches the identity of soul pervading the universe as an emanation from the Deity, is correct; that knowledge which considers there are various principles of existence, is incorrect; that knowledge which neglects this subject, and attaches itself to what it considers to be the sole business of life, is indifferent.

The disinterested action is good; the selfish action is bad; the heedless, or bird-witted action, is indifferent.

The agent unchanged by success or failure, is good; the agent liable to joy or grief connected with his action, is bad; the slothful and dilatory agent is indifferent.

Intellect understanding the limit of action, is good; intellect having a wrong view of action, is bad; intellect which takes a confused view, is indifferent.

Perseverance in resisting Passion, is good; perseverance in the pursuit of self-interest, is bad; perseverance after a vain shadow, is indifferent.

Pleasure which is at first bitter but afterwards sweet, is good; plea-

\* A great portion of the text has reference purely to doctrinal theology.



sure which is at first sweet but afterwards bitter, is bad ; pleasure which arises from dreams is indifferent.

It is advisable that each should follow his own nature, and not be guided by the nature of another. The division into castes is solely a division of labour, of the wisdom of experience, which knows and teaches that actions cannot be well done unless every man does that action which is peculiarly his own, sprung from his disposition. He thus attends to that action more, and from attention he derives facility and improvement of execution. The religious significance attached to this division by birth is a mistaken notion, already explained. A man doing his own duty is rewarded by satisfaction in himself and perfection in his work. Rational devotion brings about these results. All human undertakings are surrounded by error, as fire by smoke. Hence is the necessity of action, and perseverance after it. Wisdom is to be sought after ; and as the first step on the road thither, vanity is to be avoided, for vanity will cause destruction. In every condition of life seek after wisdom, and take refuge in me. You will thus obtain supreme tranquillity. It is idle to repeat what I have said to an unreasonable disposition incapable of receiving it.

Is your ignorance removed ?

TEXT.

ARJUNA SPOKE.

“My delusion is destroyed ; and by thy favour, Divine One ! I have recovered my senses, I remain free from doubt, and will do thy bidding.”

COMMENTARY.

MIND.

My ignorance is removed by your explanation. I have no longer any hesitation, and I am ready to act.

TEXT.

SANJAYA SPOKE.

“Thus did I hear this miraculous and astounding conversation between Vāsudeva and the magnanimous son of Prithá ! By Vyása’s favour I heard this supreme mystery—devotion—from the lord of devo-



tion, Krishna himself, who expounded it openly : and remembering again and again, O King ! this wonderful sacred colloquy between Keshava and Arjuna, I am again and again delighted. And remembering again and again that very miraculous form of Hari, my wonder is great, and I am again and again delighted. Wherever Krishna, the lord of devotion, and wherever the son of Prithá, the archer, are, there are fortune, victory, and power certain. This is my opinion."

Thus in the Upanishads of the Bhagavad-Gítá, in the knowledge of the Supreme Being, in the Book of Devotion, in the Dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, (stands) the Eighteenth Chapter, by name

"DEVOTION AS REGARDS EMANCIPATION AND RENUNCIATION."

#### COMMENTARY.

##### TRUTH.\*

Thus Reason spoke openly ; and O Popular Opinion ! the memory of it delights me ; and especially when I consider the divine nature of Reason, I am delighted and equally astonished. Wherever Reason, the lord of proper devotion and mind, is, there are certainly fortune, victory, and power.

- \* The little feeble child, whose tender hand  
 Clutches his mother's clothes in fearful guise,  
 Be thou : cling close to Truth, who leads to the land  
 Of Wisdom, the only heaven of the wise.









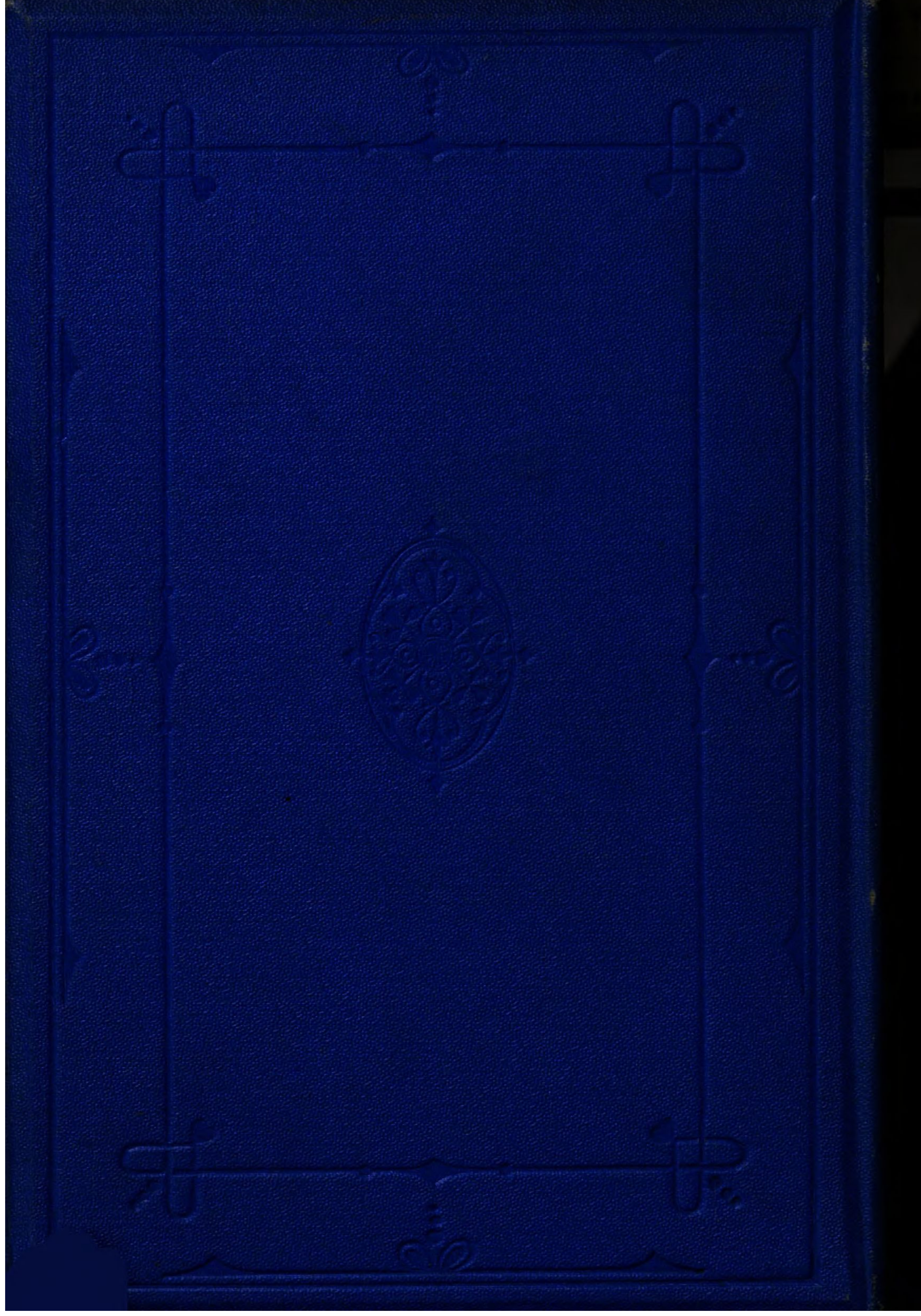














Chintamon, Hurrychund

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